

NB

November 9, 2005
Vol. XLVIII, No. 3

TA

News



New Brunswick Teachers' Association

Teachers Working for Teachers

The NBTA is a professional organization in which teachers create policy, set priorities and make decisions that will have an impact on the working lives of teachers and on the educational system as a whole.

The NBTA Board of Directors and NBTA Executive act on behalf of the Association. The Board meets at least three times per school year, with the Executive meeting monthly between Board meetings.

The table officers for both the Board and Executive consist of the President, Vice-President/President-Elect, Past President, and the Executive Director (non-voting). Thirty Directors (one elected in each branch) make up the remainder of the Board. The Board is presented in this issue along with its counterpart, AEFNB, which together comprise the NBTF Board of Directors.

Five additional members are elected by and from the Board of Directors to serve on the NBTA Executive. For 2005-06 they are (l-r): Wes Tingley (Br. 1809), Jonathan Logan (Br. 1023), Emily Daigle (Br. 1640), Brent Shaw (Vice-President), Indu Varma (President), Brian Bawn (Past President), Heather Smith (Br. 1542), Peter Murray (Br. 0820), Bob Fitzpatrick (Executive Director).

Indu Varma began her 2-year term as NBTA's 19th full-time President on August 1, 2005. The President is the official spokesperson for the Association.

She has a BEd degree from Mount Allison University, MEd degree from Dalhousie University, and a Principal's Certificate from UNB. She has taught for 35 years at the elementary, middle and



Indu Varma
President



Brent Shaw
Vice-President

high school levels.

Indu has served on various NBTA committees and has been involved with NBTA in other capacities. She has received external recognition for her teaching through numerous awards including the Governor General's award and the Prime Minister's award.

Brent Shaw is the newly-elected Vice-President of the NBTA for the 2005-2006 school year. Brent has a total of 18 years of teaching experience at the middle and high school levels, his last 10 years at his current school, Carleton North High School.

In addition to his classroom experience, Brent has served in numerous positions in the Association, both locally and provincially.

He is a graduate of UNB and holds a Bachelor of Education in Industrial Arts.

Brent currently represents the NBTA on the UNB Board of Governors.

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Next Final Copy Deadline
For NBTA News:
Friday, November 18



Professional Development Opportunities

Several valuable PD opportunities were recently held at the NBTF Building in Fredericton. The NBTA is committed to providing opportunities for professional growth as a service to its members.

Skills for Administrators' Workshop

On September 28 and 29, forty-five administrators participated in a two-day workshop entitled "Learning Focused Conversations." Part of the Skills for Administrators' series, the two days were facilitated by Cheryl Erlandson and Margaret Pillay from the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation PD unit.

The participants worked on skills associated with feedback — coaching, communication and facilitating teacher growth. Evaluations indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the workshop. "All administrators," wrote one principal, "should be exposed to this training and have the time to work on these vital skills."



Classroom Management and Organization Workshop

On October 4 and 5, Halifax teacher mentor, Sandra MacDonald, worked with forty New Brunswick teachers (many who are early career) to build their skills around Classroom Management and Organization. Because of the sponsorship of the Elementary, Middle and High School Councils, there were no costs for attending the workshop (other than travel). The participants learned numerous strategies from this veteran teacher, as well as by sharing from their own experiences and strategies.

"Having the time to reflect on our practice and to share with one another is such a luxury," wrote one teacher on the evaluation. "Thank you for organizing this opportunity for us."



Moving? Name Change? Not Getting Your NBTA News? LET US KNOW!

In order to keep our NBTA members' database as accurate as possible, it is important that you advise the NBTA Communications Department (Carlene Merrick, 452-1833) of any changes such as marital status, home address, school location, phone number, etc., as soon as possible. This is necessary to ensure that all mailings reach our members and that our nominal roll is up to date for voting purposes. Initial information is collected on the green registration forms, but changes occur. Many of these changes occur during the summer months.



We do not receive this updated information through any other source, so please keep us informed of any changes.

Thank you for your assistance in helping us serve you better.

NBTA NEWS

ISSN 0317-5227

NBTA News is published ten times a year. Opinions expressed are those of the authors, not necessarily the NBTA.

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Printed By: NBTF Printing Services

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Indu Varma

Learning and constructing new knowledge are natural tendencies of human beings.

This is how we make sense of the environment around us and continue to improve our living conditions. The question that begs asking is: if humans have a natural tendency to learn, why are so many of our students struggling to learn?

Schools and teachers are entrusted with the responsibility of "teaching" our children; shaping them into young adults who are responsible, functionally literate and numerate, independent thinkers and problem solvers with adequate skills to be successful in life.

The reality is "teaching" and "learning" is not always synonymous. As for the teaching part – New Brunswick teachers work extremely hard to teach the prescribed curriculum outcomes in a system that is in crisis (Scraba Report 2002). As for the learning – the right learning climate and circumstances must exist in order for learning to occur. Many factors play a role, beginning from intrinsic motivation and home support to class composition and support at school. Most of these are beyond the teachers' control.

Learning is a continuous process, the responsibility for which rests with the student, the home, the school, the community and the education system. The learning of our children is a shared responsibility. After all, the children are in school for approximately 30 hours only out of a 168-hour week! Dr. Abbot reaffirmed this at the recent CLC (Canadian Learning Council) conference on 21st Century Learning. He states in his book, *The Unfinished Revolution*, "If we want young people who function

Let's Focus on Learning

*"Learning is a process of knowledge construction, not simply knowledge recording or absorption. Learning is knowledge dependent, with learners using current knowledge to construct new knowledge." – Lauren, B. Resnick, ed., **Knowing, Learning, and Instruction** (Pittsburg: Laurence Erlbaum, 1989)*

creatively and as successful lifelong learners, then it must be appreciated that institutions cannot do it alone..."

Learning is a purpose-driven process of exploration, experimentation, problem solving, reflection, and dialogue. This is how the brain learns. In order to teach with the grain of the brain, our children must be given ample opportunities and the right environment in our schools to allow them to explore, experiment, and problem solve as they learn. Learning doesn't occur in isolation since it is a social and reflective process. Children need opportunities for interaction, reflection and dialogue. Our current prescriptive model of curriculum limits opportunities for the enquiry-based mode of learning. Teachers feel quite overwhelmed as they struggle to cover the required curriculum outcomes while attempting to meet the diverse needs of their students. It is, therefore, vital to place greater emphasis on Art, Music, Phys. Ed., vocational courses and various other hands-on programs in order to better serve the needs of our children. These programs would impact the overall development of a child, while aiding the teachers with class composition related issues.

Class composition continues to be a major daily challenge for teachers. It has caused an increase in their workload. Teachers are working more than 55 hours per week (2005 CTF survey) excluding the time volunteered for extracurricular activities. Academic gaps are only one part of the class composition problem. Issues related to students' behavior, and difficulties associated with medical needs, further compound the challenges for the classroom teacher.

We need to ask ourselves - Is the composition of our classes conducive to the learning of our children? Do we have appropriate and adequate textbooks, sufficient trained professionals, proper resource materials, support services, and programs in place to support the

diverse needs of our children? The short answer is *No*. Our system is severely under funded. Teachers today are better qualified than ever. They are ready and eager to teach, but they cannot do it alone, and that too on a shoestring budget for classroom resources.

From Newfoundland to British Columbia, teachers face similar challenges in their classrooms. Though as Canadians we realize that the education of our children is one of the most important investments in our collective future, yet for some odd reason it is mainly the teachers who continuously fight to improve the learning conditions of our children.

I was overwhelmed by the sheer passion and determination with which the BC teachers are fighting for improved learning conditions, as I proudly flew the New Brunswick flag while representing the New Brunswick teachers in a BCTF rally in Victoria, BC, on October 17, 2005. The big issues for BC teachers are the same as ours – class composition and class size.

Strangely enough, we focused on the same issues at our recent CAPTO meeting (Canadian Atlantic Provinces Teachers' Organizations) in Digby, Nova Scotia. As the presidents of all of the Atlantic teachers' organizations shared common concerns, class composition, assessment and professional development topped our list.

On an optimistic note, the Govt. has appointed Dr. Wayne MacKay as an independent consultant. He has thoroughly studied the issue of class composition and inclusionary practices in New Brunswick. It is time for action now. In my recent meetings with our Minister of Education, Hon. Madeleine Dubé, and our Minister of Finance, Hon. Jeannot Volpe, I have been assured that the education of our children is our Premier's priority. Let's work together and make a difference!

Our children are worth it!

Canadian Teachers Support BC Teachers



On Monday, October 17, 2005, every single president of the teachers' associations from all of the provinces and territories was in British Columbia to support the teachers. We all flew our provincial flags proudly representing our members. It was pouring rain, but that didn't dampen the spirits of the BC teachers.

– Indu Varma, NBTA President

2006 Toyota Earth Day Scholarship Program

Cultivating Tomorrow's Environmental Leaders

Every day, in communities across Canada, young people are actively demonstrating their passion for the environment through the important work they accomplish. These dedicated young Canadians are emerging as tomorrow's environmental leaders and advocates.

Toyota Canada Inc. and Earth Day Canada established the Toyota Earth Day Scholarship Program to help cultivate and nurture this environmental leadership. The Toyota Earth Day Scholarship Program encourages and rewards graduating high school students who have distinguished themselves through environmental community service, extracurricular and volunteer activities, and academic excellence.

Because environmental issues are increasingly being tackled through multidisciplinary approaches, future

environmental leaders will come from a broad range of academic backgrounds. The Toyota Earth Day Scholarship is offered to students entering their first year of post-secondary studies in the discipline of

studies in Canada.

Regional panels of community, business and environmental leaders will select the winners who best meet the selection criteria. Awards will be granted in five geographic areas with 2 in Atlantic Canada.

A national winner - selected from the 15 regional winners - will also be awarded an Outstanding Environmental Achievement Award and a Panasonic notebook computer.

Application deadline is **January 31, 2006**. The Regional Awards ceremony will be held Earth Week, April 17-21, 2006.

For applications and further information, please visit www.earthday.ca/scholarship or email: Scholarship.coord@earthday.ca



their choice, to prepare themselves for the career of their choice.

The Toyota Earth Day Scholarship Program grants 15 awards of \$5000 each annually, to be applied directly towards tuition, books, room and board (where applicable) or other educational expenses for the first year of post-secondary full-time

2005-2006 NBTA PRE-RETIREMENT SEMINARS REGISTRATION FORM

Please accept my application to attend the NBTA Pre-Retirement Seminar to be held on (check one):

DATE OF SEMINAR _____

DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION _____

- _____ November 23 - Bristol, Carleton North Senior High
- _____ December 3 - Saint John, Simonds High
- _____ January 7 - Fredericton, NBTF Building
- _____ January 21 - Miramichi, Dr. Losier Middle School
- _____ February 4 - Sussex, Sussex High School

- November 15
- November 25
- December 16
- January 13
- January 27

Name of Teacher: _____ S.I. No. _____

Mailing Address: _____ Dist. _____

_____ Name of Spouse (if attending) _____
(If spouse is a teacher, please fill out a separate form)

No. of pension years you will have accumulated to June 2006 _____ Certificate Level: _____

Are you planning to buy back time? _____ If "yes", how much time? _____

Do you have Responsibility Allowance? Yes _____ No _____ (If "yes", contact your payroll officer at your District Office and have your last 5 years' salary history faxed to Karen Vautour, 453-9795)

I am enclosing a cheque in the amount of \$5.00 / \$10.00 (please circle one) to cover the cost of registration; nutrition break, and materials to be supplied. Please make cheque payable to **New Brunswick Teachers' Association**.

I hereby authorize the NBTA to obtain information from the Public Service Employee Benefits Division pertaining specifically to my pensionable service records. This information will be utilized to prepare my individual pension estimates for retirement purpose only.

YES NO

Signature: _____

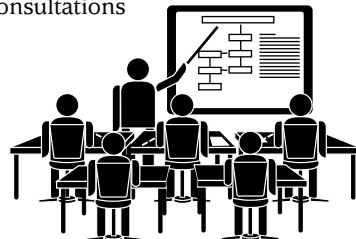
SEMINAR GUIDELINES

The following guidelines should be noted for participation in these seminars:

1. All participants must pre-register.
2. A registration fee of \$5.00 for each participant must accompany the application; however, cheques will not be cashed until after the workshop.
3. Travel and accommodation costs are the responsibility of the participant.
4. A nutrition break will be provided.
5. Questions relating to these seminars should be directed to: **Larry Jamieson**
Director of Teacher Welfare Services
New Brunswick Teachers' Association
P.O. Box 752
Fredericton, N.B. E3B 5R6 (Tel. 452-1722)
6. Any interested teachers are eligible to attend.
7. All workshops begin with registration at 8:30 am and sessions at 9:00 am until 1:00 pm. (*Except Bristol, where registration will begin at 5:00pm -- Seminar at 5:30pm*)
8. Detach and return the registration form as soon as possible.

PROGRAM

- Teachers' Pension Act
- The Canada Pension Plan
- Pension Records (will be available at meeting if possible)
- Pension Calculations
- Old Age Security
- Retirement Allowance
- Pre-retirement Vacations
- Deferred Salary Leave Plans
- Financial Planning for Retirement:
 - RRSPs
 - Annuities
 - Registered Retirement Income Funds
- Individual Consultations



PLEASE NOTE: YOU WILL RECEIVE CONFIRMATION WITHIN ONE WEEK OF CONFERENCE.

Unconditionally?

By Nancy Roach
Director of Professional Development
roachn@nbnet.nb.ca

Close to three decades ago, I was a young mother daunted by the challenge of raising two kids. A more mature neighbour gave me a profound piece of advice that has stayed with me through years of the joy, the anxiety, the elation and the disappointments, which I learned are the inevitable by-products of parenting.

"The real challenge," I remember her saying, "is loving your children for who they are, not for who you want them to be." She was right, I discovered, as my two wonderful children developed their strengths, weaknesses and personalities....each unique and in many ways different from what, as a new mom, I might have predicted or in some cases hoped for. Despite my fantasies, the piano lessons did not produce a virtuoso (or even a kid who wanted to play an instrument); there were no academic scholarships (regardless of ability...somehow the work ethic wasn't quite what it needed to be to get there!); and no amount of encouragement produced active 'volunteers' at the local hospital or seniors' home (not enough 'cool' factor, I guess).

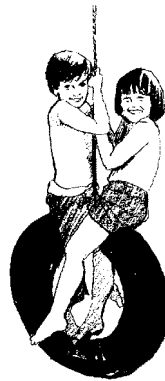
Don't get me wrong, my adult children are (as most parents will echo) amazing. And they do love music, have achieved both academic and career success and contribute to the betterment of their communities... but those traits were surely not apparent during the teenage years.

However, I knew and understood the concept of unconditional love as a cornerstone of parenting. As difficult as it was when each of them, in turn, displayed poor judgement, disrespect or a general lack of concern for my

values/directions/orders/ideas (pick any one), I always knew that I loved them and they always knew it, too. I didn't only love them when they 'got it right'!

I clearly recall also the words of my daughter as an adult when she told us that she truly regretted all the 'grief' that some of her actions had caused us. The fact that we had stood by her, through good decisions and bad (and boy, there were some bad ones!) and had

"The real challenge is loving your children for who they are, not for who you want them to be."



provided her with unconditional love and acceptance, had made all the difference.

So, you are thinking... what does this possibly have to do with teaching?

Well, it's November. By now you have spent scores of hours with the kids you teach and you have come to see their personalities, warts and all. As with parents, sometimes your students will delight you; at other times they may disappoint. Some are easy to "love", while others may be cause for a small celebration when they are absent. Some of these students have pushed your buttons, tested your patience and maybe even caused you to weep with despair or frustration. Wow, it does sound a lot like parenting!

Just as our own children need us 'there' for them, so do our students require our unconditional support.

Hold on now, you are saying....are you telling me that I have to accept some of the abominable behaviours a few students display? No, absolutely not!

In a recent article called **Unconditional Teaching**, (*Educational Leadership* September 2005) well-known author, Alfie Kohn, defines unconditional acceptance as "the countless gestures that let them know we're glad to see them, that we trust and respect them, that we care what happens to them." With the increasing emphasis on raising standardized test scores, it is easy, he says, to see those students who drag the scores down as liabilities. He points out that we must take care not to send either overt or subliminal messages that suggest we only value those who score well on tests, who have the skill set that makes it easy for them to succeed academically or who behave in model manners.

Indeed, one study (Makri-Botsar 2001) found that "students who felt unconditionally accepted by their teachers were more likely to be interested in learning and to enjoy challenging academic tasks".

This means being able to look past the nose rings, pink hair, runny noses, challenging glares, shrugs of indifference, temper tantrums, poor test results, and the myriad of frustrating behaviors that students demonstrate at various stages of their lives. We must let kids know that we value them as human beings, and that, like a good parent, we are there for them to help them succeed.

In her book *Learning to Trust*, (2003), Marilyn Watson explains that a teacher can "make it clear that certain actions are unacceptable while still providing a 'very deep kind of reassurance that she still care(s) about them.' it's not that

we don't want and expect certain behaviors, we do. But our concern or affection does not depend on it."

Watson recounts the story of how one teacher dealt with a particularly challenging student by sitting down with him and saying:

"You know what? I really like you. You can keep doing all this stuff and it's not going to make me change my mind. It seems that you are trying to get me to dislike you, but it's not going to work. I'm not ever going to do that." (Watson, 2003, p. 2.)

I am betting that students will remember that conversation a lot longer than they remember your best lesson plan.

Kohn reminds us that "accepting students for who they are, rather than for what they do," is essential to developing a student who can self-monitor behavior and who has the confidence and the sense of self-worth to make the effort to do so. You hope that like Julia Roberts giving her Academy Award speech, they will end up saying, "they like me, they really, really like me!"

He ends this article with words I wish I had written, but lacking his skill, I will share them verbatim:

"Imagine that your students are invited to respond to a questionnaire several years after leaving their school. They're asked to agree or disagree with this statement:

Even when I wasn't proud of how I acted, even when I didn't do the homework, even when I got low test scores or didn't seem interested in what was being taught, I knew that (insert your name here) still cared about me."

Calling Science Teachers

Science teachers at all levels may be interested in a resource published bi-weekly by the faculty at UNB. *Science Continuum* provides recent advances, opinion, specific resources both for scientists and for educators at middle school, high school and university, as well as links to various websites that would be of interest to teachers. For a profile of the newsletter go to <http://www.unb.ca>

//web/fredericton/science/news/editor/a/articles/What_is_SC_vol6issue9.htm. In fact, Bill Mullin, editor of the publication, is prepared to automatically send e-copies to any teacher who requests one. Just email him at sciencec@unb.ca (note the 'c' after science!)

How Many Ways Can You Say Differentiation?

It is almost impossible to pick up a journal these days without finding an article (or 3) on differentiation. It speaks to the importance of developing the skill set required to meet this challenge. Three very strong articles are featured in *Middle*

"Unconditional... the countless gestures that let them know we're glad to see them, that we trust and respect them, that we care what happens to them."

Ground (August 2005). In **Differentiating Instruction: Why Bother?**, Carol Ann Tomlinson tells her own story of her student days and the long lasting scars of being provided math instruction in a way that reinforced her belief that she was incapable of learning it. This is a powerful and moving piece of writing that provides not only compelling reasons to differentiate, but offers specific strategies for doing so.

Both **Tiering: Adjusting the Level of Challenge** (Rick Wormeli) and **Different, Differentiated, and Daily** (Gayle Andrews), also in this issue of *Middle Ground*, feature more actual practical ideas that you can use tomorrow in your classrooms at almost any level.

Ground Rules for Journals

Improving student writing remains a goal for most schools

these days. I enjoyed the ideas put forth in **Building the Habit of Writing** (*Educational Leadership* September 2005) for implementing and sustaining a successful journal writing component in your class.

Multi-Age Classrooms

Many NB schools are finding that for pedagogical reasons, multi-aged classrooms are meeting the needs of their students (which is not the same thing at all as merely combining classes for economic reason!). In **The Modern Multi-Age Classroom** (*EL* September 2005) the author shares the rationale, approach and successes of multi-age teaching as implemented in her Grades 1-3 classroom in Nevada. Despite the American setting, teachers will appreciate her point of view and her pointers.

Council Planning

I had the privilege of meeting with the Elementary, Middle and High School Councils Co-ordinating Committees last month. The plans for the May 5 Council day are well underway. Elementary Council (whose size prohibits their using a school) will be returning to Mount Allison; Middle Level Council will be heading for the first time to bustling Bathurst, and High School Council will be in Moncton. Of course, as always, teachers are welcome to register for any council day program they prefer. I know it is early, but in the blink of an eye (well, ok, maybe not a blink, but right after March Break), the programs will be in your schools. Talk with your staff and make preliminary plans now!

Closing Quote:

The principle goal of education in the schools should be creating men and women who are capable of doing new things, not simply repeating what other generations have done."

—Jean Piaget



• President's Message •

Time is just flying by and I can hardly believe reporting time is so near. When the cooler weather sets in, I always think of Remembrance Day, reporting, rejoicing and then I start looking forward to the Christmas season. I'm finding as I age that things run closer together and the new experiences become more valuable as well. This is true of the math institute I attended in September. It's not that math has changed much during my lifetime, but I realized at the institute the difficulties you might experience in the delivery if you are not a "math person". Both sessions were highly-attended and a third was organized and held on November 10th. Maggie emphasized the importance of using math language and saying what you mean as the spoken word makes a world of difference to a child's comprehension of the subject matter.

A workshop for Early Career teachers was held in early October and the responses I've heard were most favorable. You were most fortunate if you were able to attend. *Remember When* has been another success and we thank Garth Wade and his committee for another excellent workshop! The Curriculum Committee met in October and shared common concerns of teachers. If you have an item you would like to bring to their attention, Nathalie Graham is the liaison and can be reached at <grahanaa@nbed.nb.ca>.

After much anticipation, we are looking forward to the upcoming science institute with Michael Edwards of Science East. It will be held on December 1st at the Rodd Inn, Miramichi. Unfortunately, we will not be able to accept registrations from teachers in District 15 as a separate initiative is in the works for your district. You will receive information about this in the near future. Please see the registration form included in this

issue. Register early as space is limited.

Each executive meeting finds us making plans for Council Day. Since it is our biggest undertaking each year, it does consume a great deal of our attention and a lot of planning time is devoted to achieving a program worthy of our members. We are working hard to

produce a selection that will meet our diversified needs. More about this as we finalize our plans.

Best wishes as you search for just the words to express the progress of your students because I know by now that is surely your main focus.

Rona Howald

NBTA Elementary President

President's Report – June, 2005

The past year has flown by and no one realizes it any better than myself who has just completed the first year of a two-year term as president. The motto of the NBTA Elementary Council is *Teachers Helping Teachers*, and this past year we have really needed the support of one another as we worked through the negotiation process and ensuing work sanctions.

Each year gets off to a good start as a result of our communication with members. We utilize the services of the *NBTA News*, the web site and our Members' Handbook, all valuable tools in keeping our members informed about the happenings of Council.

The year took on a different beginning with a fall Council Day which was organized by a local planning committee. As a result, Council played a financial and supportive role in its success. The return of proceeds from this day will be used in a special service to members on Council Day 2006. Our thanks has gone out to Robin Andersen and Kim Silliker, as well as other members of the local planning committee for such a huge undertaking and such a successful day.

NBTA Elementary Council actively supports the curriculum needs of its members by sponsoring institutes. Five were organized for this past year, but with the negotiations situation only two actually happened - one for French Immersion teachers with James Leo Levesque and the other, Art, with Peter Gorham. Both were really well received. We also helped sponsor *Remember When*, a physical education conference and allocated funds for an early career teachers' workshop that also had to be postponed. One of our concerns has been the recent changes

to Student Education Plans, and to learn more about our members' roles in the completion of these documents a survey was undertaken in October by the Curriculum Committee. These results and other issues raised by our members was the focus of the Curriculum Committee Report that was presented to the Department of Education liaison person, Darlene Whitehouse Sheehan, in February. Ms. Whitehouse Sheehan was very interested in concerns expressed and we know from past experience that she will pass these along as the opportunities allow.

Funding for teacher growth and professional development is very high on our list of priorities as evidenced by the twenty thousand dollars we make available through Educational Improvement Grants. Arlene Pineo serves as treasurer and Nathalie Graham and myself complete the committee.

We had the opportunity this past year to review our Constitution, By-laws and Policies. They shall be presented at the AGM. Historically, the Annual General Meeting is held in association with Council Day. As there was no Council Day in May 2005 and work sanctions were in effect, the AGM has been postponed until September 30, 2005, NBTF Building, Fredericton.

With such an eventful year and all that the executive has worked through, I would like to thank them for their perseverance and diligence in trying times on behalf of our members. I know we are all looking back, but moving forward as 2005-2006 becomes another successful year for the NBTA Elementary Council.

Respectfully submitted,
Rona Howald

Elementary Council Annual General Meeting Report

I'm so pleased to be able to report that the AGM was held on Friday, September 30, 2005, at the NBTF Building in Fredericton. Although the attendance was not spectacular, we did have a quorum. Refreshments were enjoyed and the following Council members received Chapters gift certificates: Brenda Jarvis, Nancy Watters, Mary Campbell, Alyssa MacIsaac, Janet Legere, Liz Matson, Arlene Pineo, Theresa Halbot and Nathalie Graham.

The meeting saw the proposed changes to our Constitution and By-laws adopted and a new executive elected. An updated Constitution and By-laws will soon appear on the website. As well, the Communications, Ad hoc Committee on Policy 701, Finance and Curriculum Committees were set.

Executive 2005 - 2006:

President: Rona Howald
Past President: Hazel Lane Coates
1st Vice: Sandy Tingley
2nd Vice: Nathalie Graham
Secretary: Connie Kavanaugh
Treasurer: Arlene Pineo
Members-at-Large: Sandra Pentland, Debbi Sloan, Kim Silliker, Natalie Legere, Peter Gorham, Jean White, Bill Hogan

Curriculum Committee:

Angela Ralph (chair), Alyssa MacIsaac, Kelly Gorham Gaines, Lisa Kerr, Nancy Seamans, Nathalie Graham (Council liaison)

We have also made some changes to the way we do things. Due to rising publishing costs, we will no longer be sending you a copy of the Members' Handbook. It will be put online and be available from our website. We have again allocated

twenty thousand dollars to Educational Improvement Grants and we will be expecting everyone who receives a grant to provide us with a brief summary of what they used the grant towards.

The summary will be published in the *NBTA News*. We know that many are interested in many of the conferences that are attended, but not everyone can attend, so we thought this would be a good means of sharing experiences and letting others know which conferences to watch for in upcoming years.

That same weekend saw us make plans for Council Day. Since it is our biggest undertaking each year, it does consume a great deal of our attention and a lot of planning time is devoted to achieving a program worthy of our members. So, we have officially started the countdown to May 5th!

Science is Fun!

(An Institute for Teachers of Grades 3 – 5 Science)

When: Thursday, December 1, 2005

Where: Rodd Inn, Miramichi

Facilitator: Science East

Target Audience: Grades 3-5 science teachers

This full-day session will explore hands-on activities and ideas to bring the new science curriculum to life for both teacher and student.

The Elementary Council covers all on-site costs. Lunch will be provided on-site. It is the responsibility of each participant to arrange for leave, travel, and accommodations.

Maximum Number of Participants: 30

** This is an NBTA Elementary Council sponsored institute; therefore, priority will be given to NBTA Elementary Council members; non-members attendance dependent on space availability.**

Registration must be received by November 18, 2005.

Please email your registration information to Rona Howald:
rona.howald@nbed.nb.ca



Please include the following information in your email registration:

- Name
- Home Address
- Email Address
- Teaching Assignment
- Phone Numbers (both home & school)
- Elementary Council Member: Yes or No
- School Name
- District
- School Fax



Please remember, no registration will be accepted from teachers in District 15 (details are explained in this month's Elementary Council News article.)

Please refrain from wearing scents. Thank you!

What You SAY Makes ALL The Difference!

by Hazel Lane Coates

Maggie Martin Connell, author of the *"I GET IT"* series makes learning Math *fun!* There were twenty-five teachers in the Miramichi on September 30, 2005 and twenty-five teachers in Fredericton on October 1, 2005.

We spent the day learning how to use the language of Math within our classroom. The big message was to let the kids discover the ideas themselves, with your educated guidance. Children need to feel safe in order to take risks and they need to take risks to learn in Math. Problem-solving takes place when you allow children to try to solve the problem, within a safe group or with a partner. Don't forget to leave them with some sharing time after they have tried to work out a common problem, so they can see

that there may be more than one way to solve a problem.

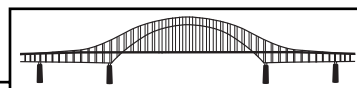
Use the correct language consistently from Kindergarten through grade five. It's imperative for all the teachers on your team to share the correct language and responsibility for developing lifelong learners in Math. To feel successful children must learn very early that there is often more than one way to solve a problem. The best part (I'm sure the children would agree with me) was the games. Maggie has developed some new Math and Language-related games. If you haven't already been told, there are game cards for your class to correspond with the book at each grade level. We had a chance to practise with them and many teachers left with class sets to take

back to their classes. Reinforce all concepts with games! They love to play them and they get to practise their skills. Make the games homework to play with their parents. It works!

A special *thanks* goes out to Maggie for making this a special time for all of us. These workshops were planned for the spring and had to be postponed to the fall due to negotiations. It was well worth the wait. The day was a tremendous success and everyone left feeling empowered with new ideas and techniques to try. There were lots of questions and suggestions of things that work well — a day well spent. We had a special visit from the new President of the NBTA, Indu Varma, and she took a few pictures for us. Check them out!



Middle Level Council News



“Language is a Gift and an Exchange”

– *Highlights from the Middle Level Language Arts Conference* –

When members of the Middle Level Council were asked at the Combined Council Conference in Moncton what they would like for future professional development sessions, an overwhelming number of our colleagues requested more professional development in the area of language arts and in meeting the

needs all learners in the classroom. One of the objectives of the Middle Level Council is to encourage the on-going professional development of teachers. The comments and suggestions collected from our members provide us with valuable insight from which to plan.

In June, one hundred Middle

Level teachers attended the Spring Language Arts Conference in Fredericton. Many teachers from across the province attended the Thursday evening keynote and Friday's divided sessions. Contract negotiations presented the organizing committee with several obstacles. However, the overall

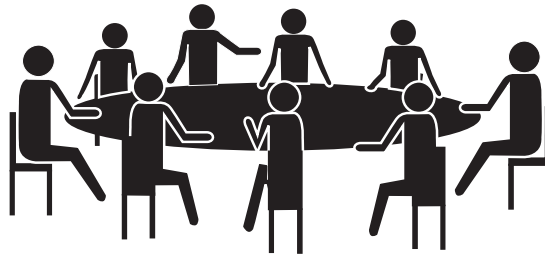
conference provided teachers with something to reflect upon, discuss and take away.

The keynote speaker, Jackie Seidel from the University of Alberta, provided us with "Meditations on Living with Children in Language and Time." Jackie's presentation challenged us to reflect on our own philosophies on learning and the development of language. Jackie's reference to language as a "gift and exchange" highlighted one of the many meditations that she suggested we explore when reflecting upon and improving our "craft." Jackie's fundamental belief is that learning is natural and that students learn through exposure in a supportive environment with time. For many of us, this simple thought provides us reassurance when we question our skills and approaches. Jackie also reminded us not to disregard picture books as they provide a rich opportunity for all learners to experience growth with language. Jackie shared several of her current favourites, *Knuffle Bunny*, *The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog* and *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* Mo Williams wrote all these stories and can be ordered at your local bookstore.

Katharine Brooks, the opening speaker on the second day, provided us a valuable two-pronged message: the only constant in life is change and to protect your attitude. With that, Katharine shared with us many stories on how she incorporated those two ideas into her own experiences in the classroom. Katharine believes that teachers need to feed students' curiosity and to teach them how to think. By sharing

experiences with her students, Katharine creates an exciting environment to learn in. There was no question that all students would benefit from a teacher who says, "Thank goodness we teach in the middle!" Katharine provided us with much to think and laugh about. Her gift to all participants, the CD *Writing Tips, Tricks and Topics*, was a great take-away for all teachers.

The remaining part of the day was organized into divided sessions.



Participants had the choice between attending Literature Circles with Cheryl Myles, Curriculum Mapping with Katharine Hartnett and Angela Thomson or The Writing Process through Murder Mystery with Valerie and Alistair Evans. Each session provided valuable information for teachers to grow, improve and progress. During transition periods, teachers were encouraged to browse the "Brag Table" where teachers shared with others some of their projects, units and final products. This was a big success as teachers filled their conference binders with assignments such as the "A to Z Book

Assignment," "Literary Critics Corner" and an outline to a "Language Arts Fair." Such creativity once again showed the amazing work that our middle level teachers do every day.

By the time this newsletter is in print, our second Middle Level conference entitled "Practical Suggestions for Working with Exceptional Students" will have been completed. It is guaranteed to be an informative session with many "experts" in the field of

exceptionalities. If you were unable to attend this session, a repeat is planned for the spring of 2006 in the Woodstock area. Further information on this conference will be in the *NBTA News* and at the Middle Level Council website <http://middle.nbta.ca>.

The Middle Level Council is committed to representing our membership and offering meaningful professional development, which address the issues/needs identified by

our teachers. Please be vocal in identifying your needs by communicating them with council members so that we can reflect them in our decisions at that level. The Middle Level Council also offers grant money (up to \$300) to assist teachers who have a workshop/institute idea and wish to pursue it. For further information contact Sandy McCurdy at sandy.mccurdy@nbed.nb.ca or any Executive member.

Take care of health and spirit,
Stacey Price
George Street Middle

NBTA Middle Level Council – Call for Presenters

Council Day, May 5, 2006 — Bathurst



- Do you have an idea or suggestion for a topic, speaker or a divided session?
- Would you like to present a session at our Council Day?

Contact: kathy.grebenc@nbed.nb.ca



Young Children and Learning: Honoring Midge Leavitt

The Early Childhood Centre, UNB Fredericton, organized a day-long symposium (Oct.15) to honor the work of Midge Leavitt. Midge worked with the NB Department of Education for thirteen years (1983-1996) on curricular initiatives, including the kindergarten curriculum, integration, the project approach, and home schooling.

Participants joined in remembering Midge through discussions which reflected her philosophy of "Respecting Children as Learners".

Dr. Sylvia Chard, University of Alberta, shared her continued knowledge and experience in the Project Approach. The Project Approach focuses on students working on an indepth, complex, yet flexible study of a topic or theme. It provides a dynamic, innovative framework for addressing learning differences amongst students and for planning for the integration of curriculum across subject areas. This approach is applicable to all level of students,

from young learners to adults.

My colleague and I who attended did not want to miss this session and we were not disappointed! We were so pleased to have had the opportunity to hear from like-minded educators who believe that the most effective pedagogy is one that begins with the consideration of what the learner is interested in. We saw example after example of teachers who employed the Project Approach all over the globe and who met with great success in inspiring amazing teaching and learning moments for their classes.

Dr. Chard has two teacher-friendly resources that are reasonably priced and very



Midge Leavitt

informative: *The Project Approach, Practical Guide #1 and 2*. They are available through Scholastic. Her website is www.project-approach.com.

This symposium was an inspiring event which renewed my dedication to our craft of connecting with young people and trusting them to often take the lead in their own learning.

The bones of the ancestors

Bones of the wise

Grafted

To my feet

Fused

To my hands

Weighted

With the courage

Of the past

Leading

To doors of the unknown

Lifting

The pen in defense

Of humanity.

Tanya Whitney, Past President
Middle Level Council

High School Council News



• High School Council •

President's Message



Derek Taggart

It is hard to believe that we are already into November! Before you know it Christmas will be here, then March Break, and then the event we all really look forward to — High School Council Day!

As I mentioned in my last article, this year's Council Day will be taking place at Bernice MacNaughton High School on Friday, May 5, 2006. The requests to present at Council Day have already begun to filter in. If you are interested in presenting at the

conference, please do not hesitate to contact me (derek.taggart@nbed.nb.ca), our Program Chair, Shane Hoyt, (shane.hoyt@nbed.nb.ca) or any other member of the Council Executive. Remember, it is never too early to think about booking your hotel room in Moncton!

Your High School Council Executive met in Fredericton on Saturday, October 1st. The agenda was packed with items concerning High School Council Day, teacher professional development and curriculum assistance. At this meeting, the HSC Executive reinforced its commitment to individual professional development

and group curriculum support by deciding to increase spending on NBTA Council Grants and Institute funding (this increase was made possible by a surplus generated by last year's Combined Council Conference). The application form for an NBTA Council Grant is located on the NBTA website and planning for a number of interesting and informative institutes is already well underway. Look for updates and application forms in upcoming issues of the *NBTA News*.

I would like to conclude this article by reminding you all again of the High School Council Mission Statement: "The aim of the Councils of the New Brunswick Teachers'

Association is to promote and foster the opportunities for professional development, communications and curriculum assistance to the teachers of New Brunswick." In order to ensure that we meet this aim, I would encourage all of you to check out our website (located in a link on the NBTA website). I would also encourage you to bring any concerns you may have regarding the above

topics to a member of the High School Council Executive. We are here to serve you.

Your High School Council Executive will be having its second meeting during the evening of Friday, November 25 and the morning of Saturday, November 26 to discuss new business and plan for May 5 and the upcoming institutes. If you ever have any items you

would like to see included on an agenda for these meetings, please do not hesitate to contact me or any of your other High School Executive members. I hope you have all had a great start-up and I look forward to seeing you all at Council Day – remember, it's right around the corner!

—Derek

Teacher Recognition Award for Philip Howland

Philip has taught 32 years, all at Chipman Forest Avenue School, except for one year; he taught at an elementary school in Whitby, Ontario.

His favourite courses to teach are Modern History 112 and English 122. He especially enjoys having a grade 12 homeroom, and helping students prepare for their launch into the adult world. Although he has not been involved in any NBTA activities, he has piloted various History and English courses.

Philip enjoys extracurricular activities such as Safe Grad, Graduation Committee, and the

Travel Club. He is involved in social activities such as the YMCA Immigration Assistance Program and the Travel Club. He enjoys international travel and live theatre. His hobbies include working out at the gym, reading, and taking university courses for interest.

Congratulations Philip, on being recognized for your contribution to the teaching profession.



Philip Howland (L) receives Teacher Recognition Award from Bernie Sisk.

Submitted by: Nancy Vessie

Space Educator Conference

Over the past few years the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) has partnered with Bonar Law Memorial School in Rexton, NB. The school has evaluated learning resources for CSA. This has provided valuable feedback on these resources before they are distributed nationally to educators. In turn the school has received mentoring by scientists and engineers from the CSA, an invaluable resource!

The CSA expanded its commitment to include all the schools in District 16. As a result, the District is to provide topics to the CSA with space themes. The CSA will utilize these topics as learning resources, and bring space into the classroom.

The school district invited teachers to submit project proposals. Two were accepted, one from Penny Curtis (MVHS) and the other from Grant Hendry (NSER). Penny's project was to grow crystals in space or microgravity. High school students were to lead elementary ones from Gretna Green through the project. Carolyn Simmons is the project

leader from this school.

Grant's project included the use of radar-SAT data to analyze ecosystem changes. This would include expansion of urban areas, change in forest/agriculture, and the progression of deserts.

The acceptance of these proposals enabled eight teachers from District 16 to attend the Space Educators Conference in Montreal from August 9-11, 2005.

This group included Joni Cormier, Penny Curtis, Todd Fitzpatrick, Rick Hayward, Peggy Gorman-Mitchell, Grant Hendry, Vanessa Playfair, and Nancy Vessie. These teachers are from all three levels, indicating the flexibility of the learning materials from the CSA.

During the conference, Marilyn Steinberg, the Program Director for Space Awareness and Learning, introduced Dr. Marcus Dejmek. He will be deciding what experiments will be conducted in space. Our



Joni Cormier, Nancy Vessie, Col. Chris Hadfield, Penny Curtis, and Vanessa Playfair

group was able to dialogue with Dr. Dejmek and he will act as a mentor for our projects as they progress.

The conference was excellent. All educators would find value in this experience. The CSA has a wide variety of topics at different levels. And let's face it, space is one of the *final frontiers!* This could not be more exciting for educators as it is a contemporary and challenging theme.

Submitted by: Nancy Vessie

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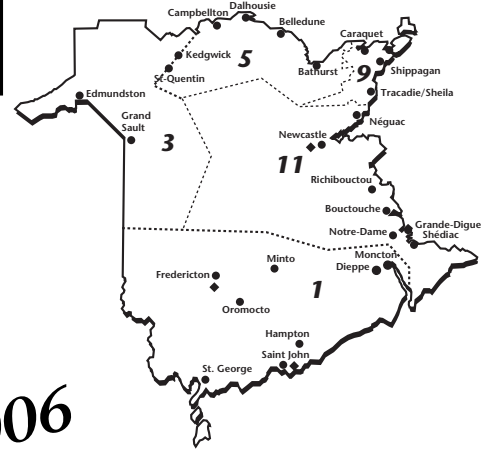
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Wayne Coburn
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Branch 27

School-Based Learning Teams Grants

In a true Learning Community, everyone learns.

⇒ **What is a School-Based Learning Team?**

A School-Based Learning Team (SBLT) is a team of 3-5 teachers from a school who decide to work together to examine some aspect of student learning with the goal of studying, collaborating, sharing and learning to improve instructional strategies that will lead to improved student achievement.

⇒ **Can you give me an example of what a SBLT might attempt to accomplish under this program?**

An Elementary Team might determine, by examining their school achievement data and their students' performance, that their students seem weak in the area of measurement. The team might work towards identifying/developing strategies to improve this area of student learning. The teachers might try various teaching techniques, learning from one another or experts, and continue to compare the progress of their students as a result of the efforts of the Learning Team. Likewise a Middle School Learning Team might recognize that their students are weak in poetry; a High School Math Team might decide to focus on improving their students application of geometric principles.

⇒ **What is a School-Based Learning Team Grant?**

A SBLT Grant is a \$1000 grant that will be awarded to a school upon successful application to the NBTA Committee established to administer the grant fund. The focus must be student learning.

⇒ **What is the Purpose of the grant?**

The grant is intended to support the work of the Learning Team. Such support may include providing some release time for the team to meet, purchasing resources to support the efforts of the team, accessing

expertise in the form of resource people.

⇒ **How often should the team meet?**

The SBLT grant extends from the calendar year January to December 2006. The team is required to meet a minimum of 18 hours throughout the year for which the grant has been awarded. Team members determine when the meetings will take place.

\$1000 Grant for your School to Support Student and Teacher Learning

⇒ **How is a SBLT different from a study group?**

In many ways the SBLT has similarities to a study group in that teachers are working together to grow and learn. *However, the Learning Team must focus on an aspect of student achievement and work towards improving the achievement levels of their students in that area.* Actually examining student work is an important part of a Learning Team.

⇒ **Will there be any help for the SBLT to get started?**

Yes. Nancy Roach, Director of Professional Development for the NBTA will meet with each Learning Team to help them launch their work. A template for recording the work of the team will be provided and protocols for examining student work will be introduced. These guidelines are intended to provide a framework for both accountability and productivity but will not restrict the direction and creativity of the team.

⇒ **How many grants will be available?**

For the calendar year January '06 – December '06, there will be five \$1000 grants available.

⇒ **How does my school apply?**

Complete the application form accompanying this article or found on the NBTA website (www.nbta.ca). A school may submit more than one application provided the guidelines above are represented in each application. **Deadline for applications is December 10, 2005.** Successful applicants will be notified by January 10, 2006.

⇒ **Why should my school consider creating a School-Based Learning Team?**

All teachers strive to do their best, but so much more can be accomplished if teachers can work together, share strategies and improve their instructional techniques. Students and teachers all benefit. In a true learning community, everyone learns. A School-Based Learning Team is one more step toward the creation of such a learning community.

The guiding question of a School Based-Learning Team is:

"What is happening differently in our classrooms as a result of what we are doing and learning in our Team?"

See www.nbta.ca for an article highlighting previous years' results.



See application on following page.

NBTA School-Based Learning Team Grant Application Form

School _____

School Address _____

School Phone _____ Fax _____ Name of Team Contact Person _____

Title of Your Team's Project: _____

Please complete the following after carefully reading the information about School-Based Learning Teams that accompanies this form. Feel free to attach additional pages.

What aspect of student learning will be the focus of this Learning Team?

How and why did your team determine the need for this focus?

How will the team monitor the impact of your efforts on your students?

Who are the members of your School-Based Learning Team? Indicate their teaching assignment within the school?

Comment on the schedule your team will develop for completing the minimum 18 hours of meeting time for your team between January and December.

Please add any other comments which you feel are relevant to your application.

Send completed application form to: **Nancy Roach, Director of Professional Development, NBTA
PO Box 752, Fredericton, NB E3B 5R6**

Deadline for applications: December 10, 2005

Successful schools will be notified by January 10, 2006. An NBTA Committee will base selection on factors including the thoughtful development of the application form, distribution of various levels (K-12) and geographic considerations.

CRYSTAL Project: Graduate Study in Informal Education

Faculty of Education, UNB

The Science/Technology Education Group of the Faculty of Education received a CRYSTAL Grant that will allow us to investigate informal learning activities in science.

We are able to offer two \$15,000 research assistantships for teachers and other science educators interested in working on an aspect of the project while pursuing a Master's or Doctoral degree. In addition, there are two \$10,000 research assistantships from the New Brunswick Innovation Fund for Master's or Doctoral study.

The four areas of study under CRYSTAL are listed below.

1. *Science-in-Action*: An Extracurricular Program For Elementary and Middle School Students
By middle school, the majority of learners find science difficult to understand and develop negative attitudes. Research indicates that stand-alone initiatives are not as effective as coordinated, sustained activities that involve students, teachers and researchers collaboratively. We will develop and implement two programs in Anglophone and Francophone schools — The Whoooo Club for grades 3 to 5 and the ECO Research Team for grades 6 to 8. We are seeking **two graduate students** (Master's or Doctoral) to participate with the Science-in-Action research team. It would be best if we had one student at the elementary and the other at the

middle school level. Ability to speak French is an asset.

2. *Crystal Forum*
The *Crystal Forum* is an innovative, grassroots, model of professional development designed to renew interest in science, technology, and mathematics. It is a crossroads-institute uniting those interested in science, mathematics, and technology education to consider critical questions and concerns about teaching and learning. *Crystal Forum* challenges traditional institute models. We will study the impact this approach to professional growth has on teacher confidence and practice. We are seeking **one graduate student** (Master's or Doctoral) with an interest in professional growth and development in science teaching to assist the research team.

3. *Outreach Activities and Experiences*
Outreach activities are the primary way university-based scientists and numerous community-based organizations in Atlantic Canada interact with schools, providing resources and activities as well as university or school-based programs. The rural nature of Atlantic Canada makes delivering informal learning experiences a challenge. Thus another focus of our research is how to offer complementary science/mathematics experiences

that are meaningful and sustainable to schools in predominately rural, Francophone, and/or First Nations. Research will be conducted in a variety of informal contexts. We are seeking **one Doctoral or two Master's students** with an interest in studying outreach activities.

4. *Online Journal*
Having students develop a more sophisticated understanding of "authentic" science practices and communities is a challenging goal in school. In this project we will develop a web-based journal and project collaboration tool so that high school (Gr. 8-12) science students across Canada can collaborate on both doing and publishing the results of their science and technology projects. We are seeking **one doctoral student** and/or **one master's student** to support this project.

For further details about CRYSTAL and the projects within it, please contact: Dr. Karen Sullenger, Faculty of Education, UNB at sullengr@unb.ca or 453-5190.

To obtain an application to the PhD or MEd program: please call (506) 453-4600 or email edgrad@unb.ca.

Applications to the PhD Program are due by **January 31, 2006** and **March 31, 2006** for MEd. When completing your application, please indicate which project you are applying for.

Educational Improvement Grants Depleted

Funds for the Educational Improvement grants are depleted for PD events between now and December 31. Funds for PD taking place after January 1 can be applied for, beginning immediately. Teachers are encouraged to apply early.

ADHD Research Hits Close to Home for UNBF Student

Cheryl Techentin has three children. Two of them have been diagnosed with Attention Deficit

Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Technically, her collaborative research is Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) testing during completion of a dichotic listening task of young children and adults diagnosed with ADHD.

More simply, the PhD student in experimental psychology at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton is immersed in a project designed to study pictures of the brain during ADHD experiments.

Ms. Techentin works with UNBF psychology professor Daniel Voyer and Ray Klein from Dalhousie University's department of psychology. She has been awarded a \$5,000 Canadian Language and Literacy Research Network (CLLRN) postgraduate scholarship supplement.

Her research certainly hits close to home. "With two of my children having ADHD, my research and studies have been personal, but I've worked with learning disabled children before," said Ms. Techentin, a native of Windsor, NS. "I've been designing programs to help modify teaching strategies focusing on ADHD children and those with other learning disabilities."

Dealing with ADHS as a parent can be a difficult task. Once the children leave home and enter into the public school system, it can be a challenging process for the parents, child and school teachers and administrators.

"There are at least seven different conditions of ADHD, but it can be difficult to make teachers aware that not all children with attention deficit are running around the classroom and hitting other children," said Ms. Techentin. "It can be difficult to understand all the differences with being ADHD. For example, many with ADHD may be

disorganized and this may be seen as a behavioural issue when it is actually part of a biological disorder."

Along with Dr. Voyer, Ms. Techentin has developed an experiment that forces one side of the brain to compete with the other side using emotional words. The selected word may be 'mad,' but it's spoken in a happy tone. The word component is processed by the left side of the brain while emotion is processed by the right side. "We want the person to name either the word or the emotion," said Ms. Techentin.

The theory is non-ADHD people tend to focus on words and ignore the emotion. However, children with ADHD have difficulties processing language by arguably using too much of the right hemispheric portion of the brain as opposed to the left portion that processes words and reading.

"In ADHD, we believe the emotional aspect will be easier to identify," she said. If those with ADHD are using too much right hemispheric activation it will affect the ability to read.

"When we learn to read, we sound everything out," Ms. Techentin said. "If we're not processing phonological aspects of language, it will affect our ability to learn to read. Children with ADHD often have problems reading that may not necessarily be a disability."

The fMRI will allow pictures of the brain while the subject is working on a project. It will show what the brain is doing and what is activated while performing a variety of tasks during the experiment.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for me and for further research of ADHD," said Ms. Techentin. "The money will allow us to use the fMRI

machine at Dalhousie and the IWK Health Centre in Halifax. You can understand the cost of neuro-imaging is expensive."

Aside from the financial bonus and ability to continue her research, Ms. Techentin also becomes involved in a strong circle of those with similar interests.

"It's important that I'm now a member of the CLLRN which opens up future research possibilities and a whole network of contacts," she said. "Working with Dr. Voyer and Dr. Klein is beyond words. Both are wonderful researchers. Every day has been an adventure for me."

(UNB Fredericton NRN: D367)

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“ S.O.S; I have ELLs in My Classroom”

by Dr. Paul-Emile Chiasson, Education Coordinator, UNBSJ

This is a preliminary look at how teachers, particularly elementary teachers, can prepare for English Language Learners, plus some helpful suggestions and strategies for those who have ELLs in their classrooms regardless of the level of instruction.

Ms. Smith is a Grade 3 classroom teacher at an elementary school in New Brunswick. For the first time in her teaching career, she has three English Language Learners (ELLs) in her class. All three come from different language and cultural backgrounds. One of the three students has never had any reading instruction in his/her native language. All three lack English language proficiency skills. Ms. Smith has no ESL (English Second Language) training, nor has she faced this situation before. She doesn't quite know what to do and how to prepare. Ms. Smith is anxious and wants to do the very best for all of her students.

This story, in whole, or in part, may be what you have already faced or will be facing in the future. As New Brunswick seeks to increase the number of immigrants settling in our province, it could most certainly become your reality.

If, as a teacher, you feel overwhelmed or anxious, there is good news — teaching with English Language Learners in your classroom doesn't mean you have to change your teaching style or strategies. Effective strategies, creative lesson plans and activities continue to be just as important. Teaching with ELLs in one's classroom is about stepping back, being aware of what we teach, why we teach and especially, how we teach. To help us help our students, we must examine in more detail, or with a heightened awareness, our own language use in the classroom. In other words, examining the “academic English” we use in the classroom, the language we use to teach content. Our goal is to help our students acquire this “Third Language” so they can adapt, function, and become competent learners in our classrooms.

For many of our ELLs, academic

English is another “foreign” language. They have their native language, English used on the school grounds or among friends, and then the English used in the classroom to teach content. It is the academic English that causes the greatest difficulty and is taken for granted, because it is known or generally assumed to be known to our domestic students. Examining our use of this language can help our English Language Learners and our own domestic students.

“Teaching with ELLs in one's classroom is about stepping back, being aware of what we teach, why we teach and especially, how we teach.”

This self-examination of our use of academic English is key. Our ESL students, according to research, will acquire their social English within two to three years. It will take five to seven years for them to acquire the appropriate academic English to be successful (Steinhorn & Checkley, 2004). Therefore, any scaffolding, for example, use of visual aids or specific techniques will increase the language proficiency of our ESL students.

What can we do to begin assisting our ESL students in our classrooms? There are a number of simple techniques and strategies that will make your teaching and their acquisition of English easier. What follows are suggestions and general strategies. Hopefully, they will provide some preliminary guidance and assistance.

First and foremost, it is very important, as Peregoy & Boyle (2005) point out, to insure the safety and comfort of our ESL students.

Some suggestions they offer are: (1) Assign a “personal buddy” to each newcomer to assist him or her; (2) Follow a predictable routine; (3) Create a sense of belonging, assign the students to a “home group”. This group should remain unchanged for a lengthy period. (4) Have the students sit in the middle or front of your class where you can observe behaviours and interactions.

Awareness of their social and emotional needs is also important. You should attempt to find out as much about the students as possible and inform the school as a whole to better respond to the needs of each newcomer. Peregoy & Boyle (2005) suggest you seek out as much information about the following as you can as it pertains to each student and their culture.

1. Family structures (What is the family structure? What are the roles and importance of each family member?)
2. The life cycles (Are particular events in one's life of greater importance and marked in a significant way in their culture?)
3. Roles and interpersonal relationships (What relationships exist in the culture and how are they defined?)
4. Discipline (How are children disciplined in their culture? How is behaviour managed?)
5. Time and space (Do time and personal space hold particular importance in their culture?)
6. Religion (Are there any particular observances and restrictions?)
7. Food (What are the traditional foods? Are there any particular restrictions or proscriptions, i.e., recommended foods?)
8. Health and hygiene (Must certain health practices or treatments be observed?)
9. History, tradition and holidays (What special events, holidays or traditions could be appropriately

observed in school? Can they be used to enhance cultural diversity in class?)

Knowing a little about each one of these categories can help avoid misconceptions, frustrations, anger, incomprehension and even embarrassment on the part of all players in the school community

Once we have met the students' social and emotional needs, what can we do in our day-to-day teaching to assist our new students? Short & Echevarria (2005) recommend the following practical strategies:

1. Identify the language demands that your ELLs will need to understand and complete the work required.
2. Plan language objectives for all lessons and make them explicit to all your students.
3. Emphasize academic vocabulary development. Literacy strategies such as word walls, semantic webs, structural analysis, demonstrations, illustrations, art projects allowing students to select specific vocabulary to study. All these strategies take on a greater importance in your classroom as they help the ELLs develop more quickly their academic English.
4. Activate and strengthen background knowledge. Remember, you must provide the necessary information to complete a task. This also entails keeping the language simple, especially at first and using drawings or illustrations to convey the information.
5. Promote oral interaction and extended academic talk. Again as in strategy # 2, engage your domestic students to assist you with clarifications, examples, demonstrations or illustrations.
6. Give feedback on language use in the classroom. For example, talk to your students about what language scientists use to talk about experimental findings, or how a historian would explain and describe past events. Model correct usage and judiciously correct errors (Gray & Fleischmann, 2005).

One key to success is to view your newcomers as a resource in your classroom (Gray & Fleischmann, 2005). They can offer wonderful information about other countries and cultures, different societies, new perspectives, beliefs and expose our native speakers to new languages. According to Boothe (2000) it is also crucial to invite immigrant families to participate in meaningful activities, demonstrations, award ceremonies, etc ... Where possible parents should also be educated and be made aware of expectations. The internet does have some translation programs and services at no cost (see: <http://babelfish.altavista.com> and www.itools.com as mentioned in Gray & Fleischmann, 2005)

From the students' point of view, there are a few things we can do to assist them. First, we need to be gentle, encouraging and patient in listening to them (Reeves, 2005). Some students prefer the safety of remaining silent than attempting the risks of speaking. Silence may also hide traumatic experiences, psychological stress and culture shock.

ELLs encourage us not to worry too much. They will learn, as we learn, over the weeks and months. Expect and accept that children will ask us to slow down and show patience as they ask for help on the same question or language problem.

Students will also ask to "play" in English. They have a great desire to speak English "in fun", not just in school (Reeves, 2005). They want to fit in and feel part of their group of peers. Some, in their teen years, will strive to remove any hint of an accent or perceived accent so as to be more a part of their peer group.

It is important to realize that if a child were to say, "My mother doesn't understand", it can mean several things (Reeves, 2005). The mother may not have the English skills to understand well-meaning notes or memos sent home. Furthermore, assisting with homework for some is impossible because of language, content or even

cultural barriers and beliefs.

Finally, ... listen. Allow them to speak and listen. Listening can help us understand that in some countries students suffer physical abuse from teachers and that is why they fear you. Behaving in some countries means silence, not speaking out in class, to answer in class, or give an opinion. School, language and our cultural norms can appear to be very strange and even be perceived as potentially

threatening (Reeves, 2005). We know how important listening is for all of our students. As

"...we need to be gentle, encouraging and patient in listening to them."

Franklin (2005) states when talking about managing the multicultural classroom, listening is essential. He cites Allen Mendler, president of Discipline Associates and author of the book, *"Just in Time: Powerful Strategies to Promote Positive Behavior"* in making this point:

"A lot of times our emphasis on cultural differences brings us to the point where educators become too worried about being politically correct and do not confront inappropriate behavior because they fear being called on the carpet. Having an awareness of how one learns and being sensitive culturally to what fits is helpful and useful, but too often educators get overly concerned about responding in culturally sensitive ways as opposed to humanly sensitive ways."

Keep using the techniques and strategies that work well in your classroom. Hopefully, with these preliminary thoughts, suggestions and understanding, our response to having ELLs in our classroom will be, *"It has been challenging, yet very, very rewarding for myself and for my students!"*

(A list of references and footnotes is available upon request.)

Dr. Chiasson collaborates with Districts 6 and 8 in providing TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) students as tutors for newcomers in the classrooms of both Districts.

Project Overseas 2005

A Wonderful Experience in Ghana

by John Thurber, Sunbury West School

Have you ever tasted fufu and hot ground-nut soup? Have you ever toured the infamous Elmina Castle? Have you ever sat on the bamboo-floored, stilt supported Nzulezu's School? Where can you experience all these? Only in Ghana!

This past summer I was privileged to travel with a group of six Canadian educators to Africa, as part of Project Overseas. This program is designed to share instructional leadership skills with teachers and administrators in developing countries.

After four days of orientation and team-building in Ottawa, "Team Ghana" spent a week in Accra, the national capitol and the centre for GNAT (Ghanian National Association of Teachers). We worked with our Ghanian teacher co-tutors to discuss and prepare materials to be presented in our workshops. This also afforded the opportunity to build a strong international collaboration, to adjust culturally and explore their national educational system. We visited urban and rural schools to see a variety of learning communities.

In the remaining two weeks, while working hand-in-hand with our Ghanian colleagues, we co-



In-School Administrators at OLA Training College in Cape Coast.

facilitated workshops on primary, junior and secondary science, math and educational administration. Each week in-services on HIV/AIDS, Gender Equity and Workshop Preparation and Presentation were provided. Participants from the southern coastal regions attended conferences in Takarodi and Cape Coast. We served a total of 540 participants. Teachers were very eager to learn, willing to start early,

go overtime and even do homework!

My specific role was to present workshops to Basic (Elementary) School Administrators on the following topics:
Role/Duties of the School Head, In-School Team Building, Effective Schools, Leadership, Effective Decision-Making,

Communication, Conflict Resolution, Discipline and Guidance. I worked with 60 administrators ranging from 1 year to 33 years' experience. Professional development was seen as a valuable commodity.

I could not help but be impressed with the Ghanian's quest for knowledge and excellence, in spite of what we might consider hardships. Collegial networking and communication among Ghanian colleagues can be challenging. Many schools do not have phones, faxes, or access to the internet. Distance and the cost of traveling is prohibitive. Some Districts have networking opportunities where colleagues meet for professional discussions; but this seems to be the exception rather than the rule. Teachers in Ghana are challenged in areas such as: teacher training (especially for elementary teachers) may be minimal; demanding working conditions with low salaries; large class sizes (our survey indicated an average of 46); minimal instructional resources; truancy due to children needing to work to contribute to their family's income.

As the west African sun set at 6:30 each evening along the Atlantic



Irene Duncan-Adanusa (General Secretary of Ghana National Association of Teachers) visited Kwami (Saturday) John Thurber at his workshop in Cape Coast.

coast, my team members and I enjoyed Red Red fish or Grasscutter soup and marveled that we were indeed in Ghana. Beyond teaching instructional leadership skills, we hoped that we would make a significant difference in building the capacity of their teachers and their union so that they could be even more effective in improving the quality of life and education for children and teachers for years to come.

Thank you to the Canadian Teachers' Federation and to the three provincial teachers' organizations (New Brunswick Teachers' Association, Ontario Teachers' Federation and the Alberta Teachers' Association) for financially contributing to this wonderful experience.



The In-School Administrators in my workshop in Takarodi at Holy Child College. My co-tutor, Prince Osei-Nkrumah, is seated front center.

Talk About Canada

Operation Dialogue is a registered charitable organization whose mission is to get Canadians to talk about what it means to be Canadian.

Our main project is the Talk About Canada Scholarship Quiz which we run annually. So far over 15,000 students have participated. We have handed out over \$140,000 in scholarships. We do not charge fees for our quizzes. All quizzes are available in English and in French. The quiz will be on-line January 23 to February 20, 2006.

*The Talk About Canada!*TM Scholarship Quiz is a national contest for students who are citizens or permanent residents of Canada who wish to earn scholarship money for tuition. It is designed so that every eligible student who is willing to make an effort should be able to correctly answer all the questions and be included in the draw for scholarships.

The quiz has fifty multiple-choice questions on Canadian subjects; all answers are linked to information on the web; students can get help from friends, teachers and family; the contest is on-line for four weeks; any student who answers all the



questions correctly will be included in the draw for scholarships.

Citizenship Quiz

We have used the software developed for the Scholarship Quiz to create an on-line Citizenship Quiz which we believe teachers and students will enjoy.

It is designed as a learning tool, not a testing tool, but teachers can access the scores of their students.

The Citizenship quiz is based on *A Look at Canada*, the guide that Citizenship and Immigration gives to people applying for citizenship. Our version is much shorter than the real test but the twenty questions cover the various topics that new citizens are supposed to know. The quiz is done on-line.

There are two versions. The Senior quiz (Gr. 10+) is designed with four possible choices for each answer; the Junior quiz (Gr. 6-10) only has two which makes it much

easier. What makes this quiz unique is that all the answers are linked to content on the web, which will help the students learn about each choice. It uses the same format as the scholarship quizzes which most students enjoyed.

If a teacher wants to try the actual quiz to see how it works, they can do so by going to

www.talkaboutcanada.ca

(<http://www.operation-dialogue.com/quiz/e/splash.php?lang=fr>) and then click on the link to the Junior quiz. They will need to Sign Up using the Group name "junior" and the teacher's last name.

If teachers want to sign up their class(es), they should contact: janderson@operation-dialogue.com.

You can visit our website at **www.operation-dialogue.com** if you would like to know more about the quizzes or about our organization.

Riverside Consolidated School Teacher Among Finalists

2005 Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History

Canada's National History Society recently announced the 25 finalists for the 2005 Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History – the nation's top teaching prize. Now in its 10th year, the award honours teachers who excel at bringing history to life for their students. **Dawne McLean** from Riverside Consolidated School was among the finalists.

Dawne McLean inspires her Grade 7 and 8 students to appreciate and to be proud of their rich Canadian

heritage. The web project, "*My Community, Then and Now*", shares "local community history" through photographs, student essays and video clips. The "Remembrance" web project honors the community World War I veterans and recognizes student participation in Remembrance programs. The "*Our Built Heritage*" fair is a memorable learning experience for school and community as students display building models and share historic research.

"These exceptional teachers have

a way of "doing" history, rather than reading it. They inspire their students to take an interest in Canada's past, and they help them develop a sense of place," said Deborah Morrison, CEO of Canada's National History Society. "Teachers are often the front line when it comes to protecting and promoting Canada's heritage, and the History Society is proud to honour them with this distinction."

NBTA congratulates Dawne on receiving this award.

26th Annual NBTA Men Teachers' Curling Bonspiel

**Carleton Curling Club,
Saint John, N.B.**

January 20, 21, 22, 2006

**Registration:
\$120.00 per team**

Not more than 24 teams will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Entries must include skip's name, address, telephone number, and team members.

(If you want to participate, but aren't on a team, contact Terry)

Send entries and cheque to:

Terry Kilfoil, Chairperson,
NBTA Men Teachers' Curling
Bonspiel,
21 Meadow Drive,
Rothesay, N.B. E2H 1K9,
Tel: 847-5429, Fax: 847-5424
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NBTA NEWS

New Brunswick Student Winner in World Literacy Writing Contest

“Write to Read” is a National Family Literacy Project of the World Literacy of Canada and sponsored by General Motors Acceptance Corporation of Canada. WLC is a non-profit voluntary organization that promotes international development and social justice. It supports community-based programs that emphasize adult literacy and non-formal education for both children and adults.

Ashley Lord, a grade 4 student in Mrs. McConkey's class from St. Stephen Elementary School, was selected as the New Brunswick Provincial Winner in the national contest. Her winning entry, entitled *Splash*, was on the theme of *Stories from My Family*. Nationally, World Literacy of



Ashley Lord, St. Stephen Elementary School, was selected as the New Brunswick Provincial Winner in the National Family Literacy Project.

As a winner, Ashley will become a published author. Her award-winning story will be published in a multi-media CD-ROM created through the artistry of Little Animation. This 3,000 CD-ROM limited pressing will be distributed absolutely free of charge to schools and libraries across Canada for educational use.

Ashley was recognized and celebrated by her school at an assembly held in late October.

NBTA congratulates Ashley on winning this award.

Canada received more than 2500 entries in this year's contest. The quality of the stories was very high and judging was very difficult.




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U.S.A. Placement: South Carolina

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Personal Goal: Go camping in Yosemite National Park

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Any teacher struggling with a *personal* or *professional* issue can access this *free* counselling service by contacting the counsellor responsible for your school district.

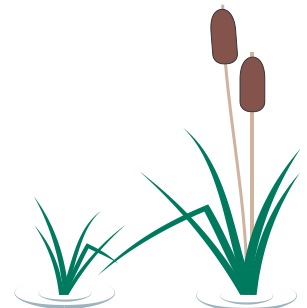
Some personal issues may include:

- stress • marital/partner • family • physical health • grief/loss
- depression/anxiety • addictions or related issues.

Some professional issues may include:

- work stress • work conflict • career concerns
- community conflict or related issues.

Group counselling may be provided if appropriate.



Announcements

Verbal Abuse Web Site

The PEI Department of Education declared Verbal Abuse Prevention Week as an annual celebration held the first week of October. This initiative met with success in raising awareness on this topic, both in their schools and in their communities. "Walk for Talk" is a national awareness and education campaign to prevent verbal abuse. It was developed to help anyone having a problem with verbal abuse, whether in their home, their school, the workplace or in sports. Further information is available at their site: www.walkfortalk.org

Free Curriculum-Relevant Resources

Save the Children Canada has developed free, curriculum-relevant teaching tools for both primary and secondary levels. It's goal is to aid educators in informing and contextualizing the South Asian earthquake for students, and providing them with concrete opportunities to help the children most affected.

Teaching tools include: Information on the earthquake, and *Save the Children Canada's* humanitarian response; Activities for elementary, intermediate, and secondary classes (group discussion, critical thinking, research, creative expression); Curriculum correlations for each province and territory; Internet links to information on the science of earthquakes, the history and geography of the affected area, and the global humanitarian effort

If you have any questions, or if you would like to inform them of your using these tools in your classroom, please contact jdhumphreys@savethechildren.ca or visit www.savethechildren.ca

FREE Online Bullying Manuals

Izzy Kalman is a nationally renowned author, speaker, and expert on bullying and anger control. His website provides complete free online manuals that teach kids, parents and teachers how to easily reduce bullying while increasing their resilience,

independence and emotional maturity. See Kalman's FREE online manual for kids, *How to Stop Being Teased and Bullied without Really Trying*. Parents and teachers will get great results by using the two "magic responses" in his other FREE online manual, *A Revolutionary Manual for Handling Children's Aggression*, and in his article, *Bullying — The Constitutional Solution*. Go to www.bullies2buddies.com.

The Pro Europe 2006 Youth Eco-Parliament

The Pro Europe 2006 Youth Eco-Parliament is an international educational platform that was launched in 2004. The Pro Europe 2006 Youth Eco-Parliament is a new high profile project that offers students the opportunity to debate environmental issues and to attend an international congress in Paris during the fall of 2006.

This year, for the first time, 25

Canadian High Schools will have the opportunity to participate. CSR (Corporations Sharing Responsibility) is looking for 25 Canadian classrooms in the grade 9-11 range to create a Canadian student delegation to attend this exciting event in Paris. If you are interested in having your class participate, please call 1-800-668-1023 or check the website: <http://www.eyep.info/>

Paralympic Schools Program

This program has been written and put together by Canadian teachers and associated educational professionals. It offers lesson plans, multi-media lessons, teacher's resources and activities for students in grades 4-6 and 7-9. This resource has been created to enrich and assist in supplementing teachers' lessons to contain inclusive content and is free online at www.paralympic.ca.

NBTA 2005 Golf Tournament



Winners (L-R): Bob Fitzpatrick (NBTA), Doug McKiel, Roger Brown, Roddie Duguay and Tim Quinn

Once again, the Annual NBTA Fun Golf Tournament was held in Saint John at the Rockwood Park Golf Course, September 24, 2005. The weather was excellent and a new record number of golfers participated -- 162. The date is already set for next year -- Rockwood Park, September 23, 2006.

The closest-to-hole winners were: #3 Tom Gillett, #10 Greg Fash and #18 George Malley.

We would like to thank the following sponsors: NBTA, NBTA Credit Union, Johnson Inc., Moosehead Breweries, Rockwood Park Golf Course, Cockburn's Drug Store, Quizno's and Ganong Bros.

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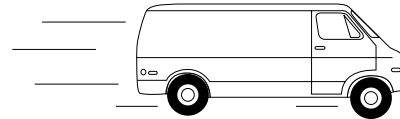
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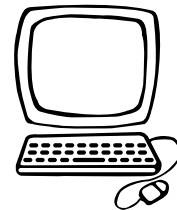
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