Editorial

Michael Podlosky, Coordinator, Professional Development

Alberta Education has released its much anticipated discussion paper entitled *Inspiring Action on Education*, which advances a vision of how we might transform the education system. If we are going to continue “to inspire and enable students to achieve success and fulfillment as engaged thinkers, and ethical citizens with an entrepreneurial spirit within an inclusive education,” teachers are going to be front and centre of this change. Already there is talk of new emerging roles for teachers as curriculum developers, assessment specialists and resource developers, and roles requiring an enhanced use and application of digital tools. While it may be still too soon to tell what will be expected of teachers, there is going to be a heightened awareness of the critical role of teacher learning as additional roles are made part of the profession.

The public face of teacher learning is already apparent in Alberta Education’s desire to develop a framework for coordinated, comprehensive professional learning. Work is already under way on a new background paper as well as a discussion guide on teacher professional learning. These documents will be the major focus of the symposium at PDAC in November 2010. Less known has been the department’s desire to seek an answer to the question, “What is the evidence that demonstrates professional learning really matters?” The focus seems to be on developing tools to measure the impact of these professional development activities on teacher learning.

So how do you know if the professional learning activities in which you participate are having value and/or contributing to the enhancement of your professional practice and on student learning? Send me an e-mail—I really would like to hear from you (michael.podlosky@ata.ab.ca).

In the months ahead, the profession and educational stakeholders will engage in a range of discussions on teacher professional learning. The provincial ATA is also undertaking a major review of its professional development policy. The result will be a deeper understanding of teacher learning and a commitment to put into action strategies that reinforce the following themes:
• The education system, including the public, has confidence that all Alberta teachers are current in their practice.
• Teachers are truly valued and supported, as professionals with a unique knowledge of learning.
• Teachers require a high degree of autonomy in determining the nature and content of their professional learning.
• Professional learning opportunities have contributed to enhanced student learning in the classroom.
• Alberta schools are seen as effective learning communities in which teachers have the time and the resources to support ongoing professional learning during the instructional day.
• Alberta teacher preparation programs have a strong professional relationship with the teaching profession and the Alberta school system to support the ongoing professional learning of teachers.
• Teachers enter the profession with a high degree of efficacy for their professional learning.
• A pervasive culture exists where the teacher acts as learning leader, a collaborative partner, a researcher, a reflective practitioner, and a change agent skilled in recognizing and responding to the learning needs of students.
• The education system supports teacher professional learning through a comprehensive and coordinated approach.

What is the future for teacher professional learning? The profession is indeed at a historical moment where it will shape that future or be shaped by it. We cannot afford to squander this opportunity. Please ensure that your voice is heard and that our collective professional and practical wisdom can influence this emerging context of educational change.

Reminders:

PDAC Registrations—November 05–06, 2010

We encourage attendees to book their room at the hotel as soon as possible.
Location: Delta Edmonton South Hotel and Conference Centre, 4404 Gateway Boulevard, 1-800-268-1133. Please state that you are booking for the ATA Professional Development Area Conference for a room rate of $142/night.

PD Contacts
If you are a new PD Chair, please advise Linda Kulak at linda.kulak@ata.ab.ca of the local that you represent, along with your residence, school and fax numbers, and preferred e-mail address.

Relocation of Professional Development Program Area
Please be advised that the Professional Development program area has relocated. Please address any mail to
Professional Development
7th Floor, 11010 142 Street NW
Edmonton, AB T5N 2R1
Renaissance Leadership: Rethinking and Leading the Future, by Stephen Murgatroyd and Don Simpson

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Michael Podlosky, Coordinator, Professional Development

If you have had a chance to listen to Dr. Stephen Murgatroyd, you will find that his passion, humour and desire for meaningful deep change in education are buoyed by a commitment to public education and leadership. These themes are infused in Stephen and Don’s new book, Renaissance Leadership: Rethinking and Leading the Future. The authors define Renaissance leaders as high-integrity individuals with sensitive awareness and a passion for driving high performance in their organizations and for helping to make their communities and the world a better place. These leaders have a sense of history and a global perspective, and inspire others to collaborate and innovate. Renaissance leaders also demonstrate an ability to take the input from various disciplines, synthesize it and integrate it for application to a specific complex task. This book is a relatively informal and engaging read for anyone in a leadership position.
21st century learners, Web 2.0 and 3.0, and social media are terms that are used frequently, but what do they really mean for teaching and learning? Connecting the Digital Dots is a new workshop developed by the Association to address the extensive and challenging topic of 21st-century teaching and learning. The title refers to rapidly evolving tools and the enormous amounts of information available digitally, with the resulting need to be constantly considering how they connect to effective learning.

The workshop contains two main sections: 21st-Century Skills and 21st-Century Environments. The first section focuses on the skills the students need to be successful now and in the future. The main research and resources that are used are from the Meteri Group (www.metiri.com) and International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) (www.iste.org). The second section focuses on the design, tools and management necessary to create 21st-century learning environments. Participants will be engaged in facilitated discussions and activities to develop strategies for creating student engagement and authentic learning experiences.

To book a workshop, contact Professional Development at Barnett House by phone (780-447-9485 in Edmonton; 1-800-232-7208, extension 485 elsewhere in Alberta) or by e-mail at pdworkshops@ata.ab.ca.

There is so much information and so many new tools that are rapidly changing and evolving that it is impossible for one person to manage and make sense of it all. Teachers are feeling overwhelmed with the amount of change and the need to keep on top of it all. We hope to help clarify and simplify some of this information, model the use of some of the many tools available for learning, and facilitate meaningful and authentic learning by giving participants the opportunity to collaborate and answer some key questions about 21st-century teaching and learning.
Patrick Loyer

Are you looking for digital tools to help in your work? Are you aware of all of the learning tools out there that could help in your work? Whether you are a seasoned veteran of the digital world and know of many of the learning tools available or a newbie looking to see what is available, you need to look at the Top 100 Tools for Learning 2009 at www.slideshare.net/janehart/top-100-tools-for-learning-2009-2509241. The presentation comes from Jane Hart, a social learning consultant and the founder of the Centre for Learning and Performance Technologies. During 2009, 278 learning professionals from around the world shared their top 10 tools for learning. This presentation is a compilation of the findings. In it you will find all types of learning tools applicable to a range of interests. These tools are not categorized, but the variety of “techno tools” is quite extensive. There are sites for blogging, creating social networks, making or improving presentations, and working with photos or videos. Each of the tools shown has an Internet address where more specific information is available.

These sites are too numerous to list, so I will provide my observations from one of them. I am interested in phone calls over the Internet, so I visited the Skype webpage. It told me what I would need, how to connect either with my computer or through my cell phone, and the cost. It also provided a list of optional accessories to increase my Skyping enjoyment. Finally, it provided a source for support if I needed it. Now that I know what Skype is about, I will likely be subscribing.

Regardless of your particular area of interest when it comes to the learning tools available through the Internet, I encourage you to go to the presentation site to find a tool that interests you and have a look. Happy hunting!

PD Partners: Essential Conditions Pilot Project

A Guide to Support Implementation: Essential Conditions: Update and Resources

At this time, stakeholders are in the initial stages of planning collaborative projects to further explore and implement the guide. A new website is available to support the work of individuals or groups who wish to use the guide. The site includes resources to assist you in your endeavours to mindfully implement new initiatives. Please visit http://www.essentialconditions.ca/ for additional information.
Despite these financially tight times, school jurisdictions are continuing to recognize that they must take a more active role in mentoring and supporting novice teachers, and seek effective ways to do so. “No matter how well prepared a beginning teacher may be on entering the profession—no matter how positive her preservice experience—the early years are always difficult. Issues of classroom and time management commonly cause significant stress.”


In 2009/10, the Edmonton Catholic Teachers’ Local of the ATA implemented a mentorship program to support the district’s beginning teachers in all grade levels and for all subjects. Administrators and mentor teachers were encouraged to work with beginning teachers to form a “Triad Partnership.” Within this partnership, participating administrators provided support for mentor/protégé relationships to flourish. Fifty-eight novice teachers in teaching placements from Kindergarten to Grade 12 were inducted in the fall of 2009.

Beginning teachers were invited to engage in the program and were financially supported by the local in three types of program activities: six workshops, meetings with mentor teachers and a school inteventation to observe their mentor teacher. Mentor teachers were also encouraged to observe their protégés, providing opportunities for reflective practice to occur. The focus of the mentoring workshops that emerged over the year was based on a needs assessment completed by the beginning teachers in September 2009. Workshops included learning about district practices and protocols in preparing report cards and Individualized Program Plans (IPPs); preparing for parent–teacher–student conferences; dealing with challenging parents; classroom management strategies; learning the technology adapted by the school system; meeting district consultants and learning about services and supports available within the district; sharing perspectives of beginning teachers and their mentors; becoming informed about staffing and contract status; and discussing one’s evolving identity as a teacher. A final celebration followed the conclusion of the final workshop and program.

Based on the positive feedback from all stakeholders after each component of the program as well as the exit survey, Edmonton Catholic will offer all components of this mentorship program to the 78 new teachers hired for the 2010/11 school year. A new approach this year will strongly encourage beginning teachers to choose their own mentor teacher, preferably someone at their school and with whom they have established a connection.

The data collected from the beginning teachers, mentors and administrators confirm that mentoring beginning teachers is a complex and multi-stakeholder task. Beginning teachers who had good relationships with and ample opportunities for support from mentor teachers (assigned or self-selected) and school administrators had the most positive first-year experiences. Further research is being conducted on how beginning second language teachers experienced the mentorship triad during their time in the program. Individual interviews with each stakeholder were conducted over the summer and are currently being analyzed for a doctoral thesis, which will be available upon completion.

For more information about the ECT Mentorship Program for beginning teachers, please contact Kristina Kastelan-Sikora at kkastelansikora@ualberta.ca.
The Special Education Council's (SEC) mission statement is to advance the education of individuals with diverse learning needs and to improve the practices and resources of persons working on behalf of such individuals throughout the province of Alberta.

In order to accomplish that mission statement, we continue to strive toward meeting several goals which are detailed below:

**Goal 1: Influence teaching practice and improve the quality of resources to achieve learning outcomes for students with special needs**

This year we are very excited to merge with the Gifted and Talented Education Council (GTEC). We look forward to having them join us as we strive for the common goal of advancing the education of students with diverse learning needs and improving the teaching practices and resources of persons working on behalf of students.

The SEC works because it influences the development of provincial and local policies that enhance the education of students with diverse learning needs. We strive to improve the quality of education for our students.

**Goal 2: Provide strong networking opportunities through professional development activities at provincial conferences and regional workshops**

SEC members come from all over the province and from all grade levels. We have seven very active regionals—Southwest, Southeast, Calgary, Edmonton, Central Alberta, Fort McMurray and Northwest. The hard-working, energetic and eager teachers who make up the executives of these regionals are there to provide programs, events and opportunities for SEC teachers in their area. They are always open to new ideas for professional development and eager for individuals to join them on the executive. It is a great way to meet new teachers and to network. Please get in contact with any one of them.

Our conference, “Celebrating the Challenges,” is held 2010 10 14–16, and the conference committee works hard to ensure that we are meeting the professional development needs of all of our members by offering sessions for all divisions through the following strands:

1) special education technology: strategies for enhancing academic performance,
2) emotional and behavioural disorders/positive behaviour intervention,
3) intervention for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder,
4) collaboration: special education and general education, and
5) meeting individual differences—special education practices: intervention for students with identified disorders/disabilities.

**Goal 3: Influence the development of provincial and local policies and programs to enhance the education of students with special education needs**

The past year has seen the Council focused on advocating for students with special needs and their teachers in response to Setting the Direction for Special Education in Alberta. This year we are continuing with that same purpose and goal in mind. We want our members to be informed of the issues and any changes that may occur due to this initiative, and so we will continue to advocate on your behalf on these professional issues.
Goal 4: Promote special education within public education

The SEC constantly benefits from the significant contributions of its members and teachers of students with special needs. These contributions advance and benefit the field of special education. The SEC annual awards recognize these significant contributions in support of public education in Alberta. The three awards recognize an individual and his or her outstanding professional contribution to the field of special education; an individual or team who provides evidence of a successful, effective program in special education; and a graduate student whose research is directly related to the education of students with special needs.

The SEC executive works hard to advocate for our members and their students in this changing time. As a member, you can keep informed by reading our quarterly newsletter and checking us out at www.specialeducation.ab.ca. On our website you can also sign up to be on our listserv. We are always open to hearing from you.

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Look Who’s Talking

Focus on New Region A PD Facilitator—Jen Clevette

Jen Clevette is a teacher with the Peace Wapiti School Division in northwestern Alberta. This is her first year as Region A’s professional development facilitator. The previous two years, she was Northern Spirit’s PD chair and helped coordinate districtwide PD endeavours. Currently she is the educational technology coordinator with Peace Wapiti School Division. In this role she travels to schools to help teachers meaningfully integrate technology into their daily classroom practice. She also is the North West PD representative for the Education Technology Council. Jen works closely with the Northwest Regional Learning Consortium and the Mighty Peace Teachers’ Convention to offer PD opportunities in technology integration. She is a Moodle and SMART certified teacher and facilitates sessions on podcasting, personal learning networks, Web 2.0, Moodle and SMARTboards.

Jen believes that professional development is a very personal journey. What each teacher needs to meet personal growth goals is different and it is important to start where that teacher is and move forward from there. Professional development is also a time for collaboration and sharing. Working together, educators are a force to be reckoned with. Jen believes that personal learning networks (PLNs) are opening doors and opportunities for quality PD like never before. PD is no longer bound by geographic obstacles or the people you know in real life—there is a world of educators out there who are willing and waiting to help on your PD journey.

Jen lives in Grande Prairie with her husband, Darcy, an IT director, and their two children, Corbyn (five) and Alexandra (four). Jen can be found tweeting at http://twitter.com/jenclevette and blogging at http://pwseducationaltechnology.blogspot.com and http://jenclevette.posterous.com about technology, education and the kitchen sink.
Quoi de neuf?

La rentrée scolaire 2010... aussi à l’ATA!

Services en français

- Nous sommes heureux d’accueillir une deuxième traductrice au secteur de la Direction de l’ATA. Régine Toal épaule maintenant Violette Bigeat aux travaux de traduction et de mise à jour des documents que nous préparons à l’intention de nos membres qui enseignent en français.
- Deux affiches pour mettre en garde les élèves avides de nouvelles technologies ont été envoyées en septembre dans toutes les écoles francophones et d’immersion.

Réservez nos ateliers!

- Souhaitons la bienvenue à notre nouvelle équipe francophone d’animateurs pour l’année 2010-2011 : Alyre Morin, Paulette Sparrow et Colette Pedde.
- Nous proposons plusieurs ateliers que nos animateurs sont prêts à présenter en français au prix modique de 100 $. Consultez la description de ces ateliers dans notre guide à http://www.teachers.ab.ca ➤ About the ATA ➤ Professional Development ➤ PD Programs and Services ➤ PD Programs and Services Guide 2010-11. Notre coordinatrice d’ateliers, Debra Augustyn, prendra vos réservations au (780) 447–9485 et fera tous les arrangements nécessaires.

Webinaires (conférences en lignes)


Teacher Qualifications Service

- Nous aimerions signaler le retour de Joanne Lavallée-Chabot, au Teacher Qualifications Service. Joanne se fait toujours un plaisir de vous répondre en français lorsque vous avez des questions au sujet de votre demande d’évaluation de formation à fin salariale.

Fédération canadienne des enseignantes et enseignants (FCE)

- Félicitations à Monique Gravel, facilitatrice de perfectionnement professionnel francophone qui représente l’Association au Comité consultatif de langue française de la FCE.

Unité locale francophone no 24 (l'Unité)

- Nous souhaitons une belle année au nouveau Comité exécutif de l’Unité qui a commencé son travail lors de sa première réunion, le 25 septembre à Calgary. Magali Goupil, enseignante de 1e année à l’École la Source de Calgary, nommée présidente en février dernier, est maintenant épaulee par : Maxime Lessard, vice-président et responsable du perfectionnement professionnel; Isabelle Mc Lure, secrétaire; Karine Desgagné, directrice des communications; et Patrick Gélinas, trésorier.
Ensemble ils forment une équipe enthousiaste, dynamique et dévouée à la cause francophone qui travaillera d’arrache-pied pour servir les 550 membres de l’Unité. Cette année, un sous-comité de perfectionnement professionnel, composé d’un représentant de chacun des cinq conseils scolaires, a été créé pour produire un guide de perfectionnement professionnel, pour faire avancer le dossier du mentorat, et pour promouvoir des activités de formation continue.

Enseignants débutants
- Le Congrès des enseignants débutants aura lieu le 30 septembre, 1er et 2 octobre à Edmonton, et les 15, 16 et 17 octobre à Calgary. Des ateliers en français, à l’intention de nos nouveaux membres, y seront offerts. L’ATA encourage la participation à ce congrès en offrant des subventions (Grants in aid) afin qu’un plus grand nombre d’enseignants puissent y assister et être ainsi mieux préparés aux défis de leur première année.

Le perfectionnement professionnel est au cœur de toutes nos démarches et plusieurs activités seront annoncées cet automne pour vous aider au quotidien dans votre salle de classe.

N’hésitez pas à nous contacter si vous avez des questions ou si vous avez besoin de renseignements.

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**Upcoming ATA Events**

**October**
- 22–24: Mathematics Council Conference
- 22–24: CSA Western Canada Education Administrators’ Conference
- 29–31: Second Languages and Intercultural Council Conference

**November**
- 4: PD Facilitators’ Fall Meeting
- 4: Convention Association Meeting
- 5: Convention Treasurers’ Seminar
- 5–6: Fall Professional Development Area Conference (PDAC)
- 5–7: Early Childhood Education Council
- 5–7: English as a Second Language Council
- 11: Remembrance Day
- 12–14: Fine Arts Council Conference
- 15–16: Leadership Essentials for Administrators
- 19–21: Guidance Council Conference
- 19–21: Le Conseil français Conference
- 19–21: Science Council Conference

Edmonton Catholic has revised its spring break to coincide with Edmonton Public’s spring break, scheduled for March 29–April 5, 2011.