



PD E-News

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Editorial



New Faces, New Places, New Curriculum Spaces ...

Andrea Berg

Just as Alberta teachers have opened their doors to a fresh academic year, the Association, too, has welcomed the opportunity to work with new faces, new places and new curriculum spaces. The Professional Development program area is delighted to introduce the new faces of staff officers Jeff Johnson and Monique Gravel. Their varied expertise will serve to enhance professional development programming for administrators and specialist councils respectively. This issue of *PD E-News* features brief biographies of both, and both of them look forward to working with teachers across the province.

The beginning of the new school year has also seen the expansion of official partnerships with new places. Through memorandums of agreement, the Association is now building formal relationships with the following postsecondary institutions: King's University College, Concordia University College of Alberta, Ambrose University College and Mount Royal University. These relationships will continue to foster a shared vision for teacher training institutions and

the profession. Opportunities to collaborate will continue as these relationships are nurtured through the Association's work with preservice teachers and academic faculty.

The advent of Inspiring Education to educate Alberta students as engaged thinkers and ethical citizens with entrepreneurial spirits has led to the potential creation of new curriculum spaces. Curriculum redesign aims to make Alberta's curriculum responsive and relevant to students through a cocreative and collaborative model. The profession has been actively involved in the discussions about curriculum redesign and is hopeful that innovative change will serve the needs of Alberta students. Gaylene Schreiber, secretary to the Curriculum Committee, discusses some of these details in her article in this issue of *PD E-News* entitled "Curriculum renewal processes underway."

These emerging initiatives and new relationships present exciting opportunities for professional development in Alberta. I encourage you to follow the developments of these initiatives and others on the Professional Development section of the Association website at www.teachers.ab.ca/For%20Members/Professional%20Development/Pages/Index.aspx.



The Alberta Teachers' Association

Coordinator's Corner

Mark Yurick



A short while ago, at the completion of a workshop on Teacher Professional Growth Plans, a teacher at the workshop asked me where he might find some information related to the goals in his growth plan. I

was delighted to let him know that the Association has several places he might turn. For example, once teachers log on to the Association website, they can access information electronically through the Journal Articles Online link. This provides access to two electronic databases, the Professional Development Collection and Wilson's Education Full Text. Both are easy to use and provide excellent access to the most up-to-date research and writing on a variety of topics. In addition, we are very fortunate to have a world-class professional library complete with out-of-this-world helpful staff in Sandra Anderson and Sheeba Kamran. Members can connect with Sandra or Sheeba through 1-800-232-7208 or by e-mail at library@ata.ab.ca to gain invaluable

assistance in researching topics, as well as access to resources from the Association's collection. Our specialist councils can also be a wonderful resource for securing resources for a growth plan.

Finally, I reminded the teacher that in addition to Association resources there are many other areas to explore—the websites of Alberta Education, <http://education.alberta.ca/resources.aspx>, <http://education.alberta.ca> and <http://education.alberta.ca/teachers.aspx>; the Alberta Assessment Consortium, www.aac.ab.ca; the Alberta Regional Consortia, www.arpc.ab.ca; and the 2Learn.ca Education Society, www.2learn.ca can all provide valuable information.

Of course, I advised him to contact his local professional development chair to see if there were some opportunities specific to his local or jurisdiction that might interest him.

At the end of the conversation, the teacher thanked me and suggested that I find a way to share this information with others. I told him that it was a great idea, one that I intended to follow up on, and this is it!

Upcoming PD Events

November

Conference

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 18–19 | Leadership Essentials for Administrators |
| 20 | Webinar for Beginning Teachers: Classroom Management |
| 22 | Convention Treasurers Seminar |
| 28–29 | Convention Association Meeting |
| 29 | PD Facilitators Meeting |
| 29–30 | Fall Professional Development Area Conference |

December

- | | |
|---|--|
| 2 | Webinar for Beginning Teachers: Engaging Students—The Art of Effective Instruction |
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Meet the New Staff Officers

Monique Gravel



Bonjour! It is an honour to be working with and for the teachers of Alberta in my new position as a staff officer in both the Professional Development and Teacher Welfare program areas. Since I joined staff on August 1, I have been immersed in

the marvels of the Association.

Currently, my portfolio includes working with specialist councils to be receptive to the needs of their teachers. I will also be supporting the professional development of the English as a Second Language Council and the work of the PD chair and facilitators in the francophone local, Unité locale francophone 24. As well, I will represent the views and perspectives of teachers on the Consortium provincial francophone and as observer on the Curriculum Committee. In addition, I am actively involved in the negotiation process with several bargaining units throughout the province and respond to questions and concerns of individual teachers with matters arising from their collective agreement.

As a former teacher with the Conseil scolaire du Centre-Nord, I have gained a variety of experience, from elementary and junior high teacher to high school counsellor. During my career, I have been fortunate to receive a three-year secondment to U of A's Campus Saint-Jean as practicum associate and as wellness program manager with Alberta Education's French Language Services Branch. Additionally, I have served the Association on diverse committees such as school rep, Economic Policy Committee member, Negotiating Subcommittee member, economic consultant, PD facilitator and, most recently, ATA representative at the Canadian Teachers' Federation on behalf of Francophone teachers. This work and experience have been very rewarding and

were the impetus for acquiring my master's of education, in French, at the University of Alberta's Campus St-Jean. I am excited to continue my work with the Association and provide bilingual service to teachers across the province. I invite you to contact me (monique.gravel@ata.ab.ca) with your inquiries or concerns about improving your professional practice, and encourage you to become actively involved in one of the many committees offered through the Association.

Jeff Johnson



I am happy to take this opportunity to introduce myself. I have been executive staff officer in the Professional Development program area since April and am pleased to be able to be part of the vibrant Professional Development team at

the Alberta Teachers' Association. My name is Jeff Johnson (no, not that Jeff Johnson—the ATA's Jeff Johnson). I am a bilingual teacher and school leader who brings to the Association extensive experience in staff and leadership development, classroom assessment, and instructional technology and 21st-century pedagogies.

So far in life I have had the pleasure of serving the Saskatchewan Liquor Board as a staff development officer responsible for PD and communications, running a large millwork facility in the State of Georgia, being a husband and father, and loving a career in teaching that began in 1992. I began my postsecondary studies at the University of Georgia and went on to earn a BA (Hons) degree in history and French as well as a BEd from the University of Saskatchewan before achieving a master's degree in educational leadership from the University of Portland. I began my teaching career in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan before moving on that first year to a teaching role and subsequent school leadership role in



Edmonton Catholic Schools. I was a teacher at a number of schools in the district and very active as the president of Alberta Technology Leaders in Education (ATLE) for several years, and in a variety of other service roles in the ATA, including president of the Council for School Leadership, Edmonton Area. Since 2009, I have served as director of the annual conference held by the Council for School Leadership and I also had the honour of leading this year's Canadian Association of Principals conference, in Banff. I have directed a wide range of conferences throughout Alberta and elsewhere in North America and throughout my career I have represented my school board and the Association in various leadership roles. I have represented Edmonton Catholic teachers as a delegate at the ATA's Annual Representative Assembly

every year of my career and had the pleasure of serving two terms as an elected member of my local executive.

This year I was very proud to be one of a handful of Canadian educators to be named an Apple Distinguished Educator—Class of 2013, at Apple's education headquarters in Austin, Texas. I am so very excited to continue my work with the Association in the service of our members throughout Alberta. In that service I will have a strong focus in my work serving the needs of the school leaders—principals and assistant principals—of Alberta. Please do not hesitate to contact me (jeff.johnson@ata.ab.ca) with any questions or inquiries about school leadership or growing as a professional. I look forward to working with all of you!

Introducing... the new ATA workshops! Coming to a PD session near you—

Fall 2013!

Andrea Berg

Promoting the Success of Students from Immigrant Families

Classrooms in Alberta are ethnically more diverse every year, giving us new challenges and opportunities. This workshop will give participants an opportunity to strengthen their cultural awareness and competence, deepen their understanding of the challenges immigrant families face, and learn classroom and schoolwide strategies for working with immigrant students and their parents.

Not-So-Random Acts of Kindness: Engaging Students in Thoughtful Social Justice Actions

This workshop will help school staffs examine various approaches for undertaking meaningful social justice activities while engaging students in every step of the process. It provides ways for teachers to help students critically examine relevant issues and then take actions designed to promote principles of fairness, equity and social justice locally and globally. Exemplars, resources and opportunities to dialogue are built into this workshop experience.

As with all Association workshops, these workshops emphasize interactivity, practical strategies and resources for further study. ATA workshops are provided to members at the low cost of \$100 plus GST per group and can support a comprehensive professional development plan at the school or district level. To book this or any other PD workshop, please contact Debra Augustyn, in 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.



Expérience unique de trois enseignantes à l'Institut d'été de l'ACELF

Françoise Ruban



Cette année, l'Alberta Teachers' Association en collaboration avec le Consortium provincial francophone a proposé des stages de perfectionnement professionnel pour encourager les enseignants débutants francophones à se

perfectionner. En juillet dernier, trois enseignantes à l'élémentaire ont suivi des stages de perfectionnement professionnel dans les locaux de l'Institut d'été de l'Association canadienne d'éducation de langue française (ACELF) au Québec. L'une d'entre elles, Julie Choquette, raconte dans cet article l'expérience unique qu'elle a vécue. Les trois enseignantes feront aussi une présentation de ce qu'elles ont appris à l'occasion du Congrès North Central Teachers' Convention Association (NCTCA) qui se tiendra début février 2014.

Par Françoise Ruban, cadre supérieure au secteur du Perfectionnement professionnel et de la direction de l'ATA



1. Que m'a appris cette expérience?

Lors de ce stage sur la construction identitaire dès la petite enfance, j'ai aimé partager des découvertes avec mon groupe. J'ai apprécié le fait qu'il y ait des réalités semblables dans la francophonie

à travers le Canada. De Lethbridge au Nunavut, les réalités francophones en milieu minoritaire sont vraiment similaires. Les formations et les échanges ont été d'une richesse indescriptible. J'ai appris de nouvelles activités pour permettre à mes élèves d'aimer le français et la culture française dès la petite enfance.

2. Quel a été l'impact de cette expérience sur votre vie professionnelle?

Le stage à l'ACELF m'a redonné des ailes et apporté de nouvelles idées. Je commence une quatrième année scolaire à la maternelle avec beaucoup plus d'outils et d'idées pour peaufiner mes cours. Tout ce que j'ai appris sur l'utilisation des marionnettes, entre autres, va me permettre d'accroître la communication en français dans ma classe. L'enseignement de la littératie et de la numératie avec du matériel semi-abstrait, concret et abstrait, au détriment du papier et du crayon, viendront agrémente mes planifications. L'accueil des élèves au quotidien, en groupe ou individuellement, me permettra de les faire parler davantage et de les encourager à s'exprimer en français. Le stage m'a aussi permis de réfléchir à ma profession d'enseignante à la maternelle et à mon travail quotidien en classe.

3. Quel impact a eu cette expérience sur votre pratique pédagogique professionnelle?

Je planifie toujours mes cours en tenant compte du stade de développement de mes élèves dans diverses dimensions de la pédagogie culturelle. L'enseignement différencié en français sera plus présent dans ma pratique, vu son importance pour permettre aux élèves de se reconnaître dans la culture francophone. Les dimensions de développement ne se retrouvent pas seulement au niveau académique, mais aussi au niveau de leur identité culturelle. C'est un sujet dont on a parlé en début d'année avec les parents à la suite d'une formation. Les parents ont dû créer la silhouette culturelle de leur enfant et expliquer dans une bulle de réflexion l'importance que leur famille accorde à la francophonie. Des réflexions très intéressantes en sont ressorties. Je peux désormais mieux préparer les activités culturelles en tenant compte du stade de développement de l'enfant.

Julie Choquette

Research Update

Gaylene Schreiber



Teaching in the Early Years of Practice: A Five-Year Longitudinal Study

In June 2013, the Association published the results of its study on the early years of professional practice. The study commenced

with the intent to

understand (1) Why do so many early career teachers leave the profession? and (2) Where do such teachers go?

The culminating report features comprehensive information regarding these two questions and others that arose during the course of the study.

Key Findings

What It's Like to Be a New Teacher

Study participants varied greatly, not only in the amount of support that they received, but also in the self-confidence, resourcefulness and persistence they exhibited in their first years. Despite these differences, participants generally agreed that what they most wanted during their initial years of teaching were the following conditions:

- A stable teaching assignment that would give them a sense of community and enable them to build on their past learning experiences
- A safe environment in which colleagues would seek them out, offer support and answer their questions
- A supportive administrator capable of communicating his or her expectations clearly

- Orientation to the school's norms, routines, rules and idiosyncrasies
- A manageable teaching assignment and reasonable limits on extracurricular expectations
- Ample formative feedback from colleagues and administrators
- Transparency in hiring criteria and hiring practices

During their first years of teaching, beginning teachers experience periods of intense overwork. By years four and five of the study, many participants were pulling back due to exhaustion and family commitments, leaving novice teachers to pick up the demands. The study suggests that some school boards and administrators may regard the energy and enthusiasm of new teachers as expendable resources rather than as enduring assets to the school community. Even with excellent supports in place, new teachers need time and experience to grow professionally. Colleagues and administrators can help in this process by allowing new teachers the freedom to experiment, learn from mistakes and successes, and develop a unique and authentic professional identity.

The 72-page report can be accessed at www.teachers.ab.ca under Publications. Members may wish to order paper copies from Barnett House Distribution. Inquiries about the research study should be directed to J-C Couture at jc.couture@ata.ab.ca. For more information about Association mentorship programs, contact Françoise Ruban at francoise.ruban@ata.ab.ca.

Reminder

If you are a new PD chair, please send your name, the name of the local you represent and preferred contact information to barb.bossert@ata.ab.ca.



Curriculum Corner

Curriculum renewal processes underway

School authorities invited to participate

Gaylene Schreiber, ATA Executive Staff, Professional Development



To achieve the educational changes envisaged through Inspiring Education and the new Ministerial Order on Student Learning, the Department of Education invited publicly funded Alberta school authorities,

who will serve as lead vendors, and their partners to develop proposals for codeveloping a new curriculum for K–12 that is digitally based, based on literacy and numeracy, and competency focused. Invitations were extended in August 2013.

The new curriculum will use current programs of study as a starting point, attempt to reduce the number of specific student learner outcomes, and create relevant and creative teaching and learning resources. While lead vendors must be publicly funded school authorities, they are encouraged to partner with experts in subject matter, business and industry, resource developers, and postsecondary and nonprofit/community organizations.

Inspiring Education developed a vision for an educated Albertan as an engaged thinker and ethical citizen with an entrepreneurial spirit. Curriculum redesign, one of the resulting initiatives of Inspiring Education, will ensure that Alberta's curriculum—programs of study, assessments, and learning and teaching resources—remains responsive and relevant to students. One part of curriculum redesign is prototyping new curriculum in a cocreative and collaborative model. Prototyping proposals will be received until November 1, 2013. The contract is anticipated to run from January to December 2014.

A maximum of eight contracts will be awarded, with a total budget of \$3,200,000. Alberta Education curriculum development teams will work with successful vendors. Successful vendors will develop curriculum in English, French, or both English and French, in one or more grade-level groupings (K–3 and Grades 4–6, 7–9 and 10–12). Curriculum will be developed simultaneously in arts education, language arts (English language arts and/or French language arts and/or Français), mathematics, sciences, social studies and wellness education.

Project products will include

- a project plan that describes an approach consistent with the changes and cultural shifts required for transformational change as envisaged in Inspiring Education;
- draft K–12 scope and sequence for each of six subject/discipline areas: arts education, language arts, mathematics, sciences, social studies and wellness education;
- draft learning outcomes for programs of study for these six subject/discipline areas;
- identified and/or developed classroom-based assessments to support learning;
- identified and/or developed learning and teaching resources; and
- a draft graphic organizer to illustrate the relationship among literacy, numeracy, the cross-curricular competencies and the subject/discipline areas.

Alberta Education will collaborate with successful applicants to refine draft competency indicators, literacy and numeracy benchmarks, essence statements for subject/discipline areas, and guiding



principles for curriculum development. Alberta Education teams will also work with successful applicants to enhance the digital curriculum development application (CDA), currently under development and/or other technology tools used in curriculum development prototyping, based on their experiences with using them in authentic learning environments.

The project will feature a research component to document the curriculum development process. Interested applicants will have an opportunity to articulate their plan for prototyping, including any interest they have in exemption from current curriculum or evaluation structures and how they will articulate any exemptions to the stakeholder community.

The Alberta Teachers' Association advocates for curriculum development processes that reflect systemic and structured consultation with the profession and include collaboration and communication with the teaching profession to meet the needs of all of Alberta's students.

Professional Development Opportunities



Mental Health **O**nline **R**esources for **E**ducators

Healthy Minds/Healthy Children Outreach Services

Child and Adolescent Addictions and Mental Health Program of Alberta Health Services

Healthy Minds/Healthy Children Outreach Services, in partnership with the University of Calgary and with special funding from the Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation, is pleased to offer Mental Health Online Resources for Educators (MORE).

MORE is a program of online professional development for classroom teachers and other school personnel working in ECS through Grade 9 in school divisions throughout southern Alberta. There has been increasing realization of the important role that educators can play in the promotion of positive mental health.

One in five children and youth, which is approximately 200,000 young people in Alberta, experience mental health problems. More than 125,000 of them are not receiving treatment.

Schools are natural places to reach children and their parents/caregivers, and may be a point of access to mental health services. Educators are in a unique position to build strategies into classroom activities thus possibly helping to prevent mental health problems from developing in their students.

Online modules on topics addressing child and adolescent mental health issues are offered throughout the academic year. They are designed in short manageable time blocks that participants can fit into their busy schedules. The average module, available on-line for a month, takes between 1 to 2 hours to complete. Each module includes an audio-visual presentation, with classroom strategies as a primary focus, as well as resources and the opportunity to participate in an online discussion board. Certificates of Completion are available upon completion of all module components.

Program Objectives

- ✓ To improve educators' abilities to identify mental health concerns and to refer when necessary
- ✓ To improve school environments by raising awareness and reducing stigma around mental health issues

Modules are on a first come, first served basis. For more information, call **MORE**: 403-220-4310 visit <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9167.asp> or email hmhc@albertahealthservices.ca



Survey of Digital Reporting and Digital Assessment Tools

The Alberta Teachers' Association, in collaboration with researchers from the University of Alberta, is studying how the use of digital reporting and digital assessment tools is increasingly affecting the workload of teachers and principals, student learning and overall assessment practices. This is the third study on this important issue that the Association has undertaken in the last five years.

As used in this survey, the term *digital reporting* refers to software (such as Student Achieve, School Zone, Desire 2 Learn and PowerSchool) that facilitates the gathering and analysis of student data for the purpose of reporting student progress. The term *digital assessment* refers to software (such as Mathletics, SuccessMaker, Dreambox Learning Math and Raz-Kids Reading) that serves as an interactive teaching device. Digital assessment is also known as *adaptive learning* and/or *real-time assessment*.

The survey, which should take 15 to 20 minutes to complete, is totally voluntary, and you are free to skip questions. You can withdraw from the survey at any time until you click the Submit button at the end. There are no known risks associated with participating in this study.

All responses will be kept confidential, and only aggregate data will be reported. No data from open-ended questions that could identify individual respondents will be used without permission. Evaluative researchers from Evaluation and Research Services (ERS) at the Faculty of Extension will analyze the data and provide a report to the Alberta Teachers' Association. The results may also be presented at academic conferences or published in academic journals. ERS will securely store any information collected from you for a minimum of five years.

The second phase of the study will involve focus groups during the winter of 2014. If you would like to participate in a focus group, please follow the instructions at the end of the survey.

If you have any questions about this survey, contact Stanley Varnhagen by e-mail at stanley.varnhagen@ualberta.ca or by phone at 780-492-3641.

A research ethics board at the University of Alberta has reviewed the plan for this study to ensure that it adheres to ethical guidelines. Questions about participants' rights and the ethical conduct of research should be directed to the Research Ethics Office at 780-492-2615.



So, Have You Heard Of “EdCamp”?

Ellen Vanderkolk

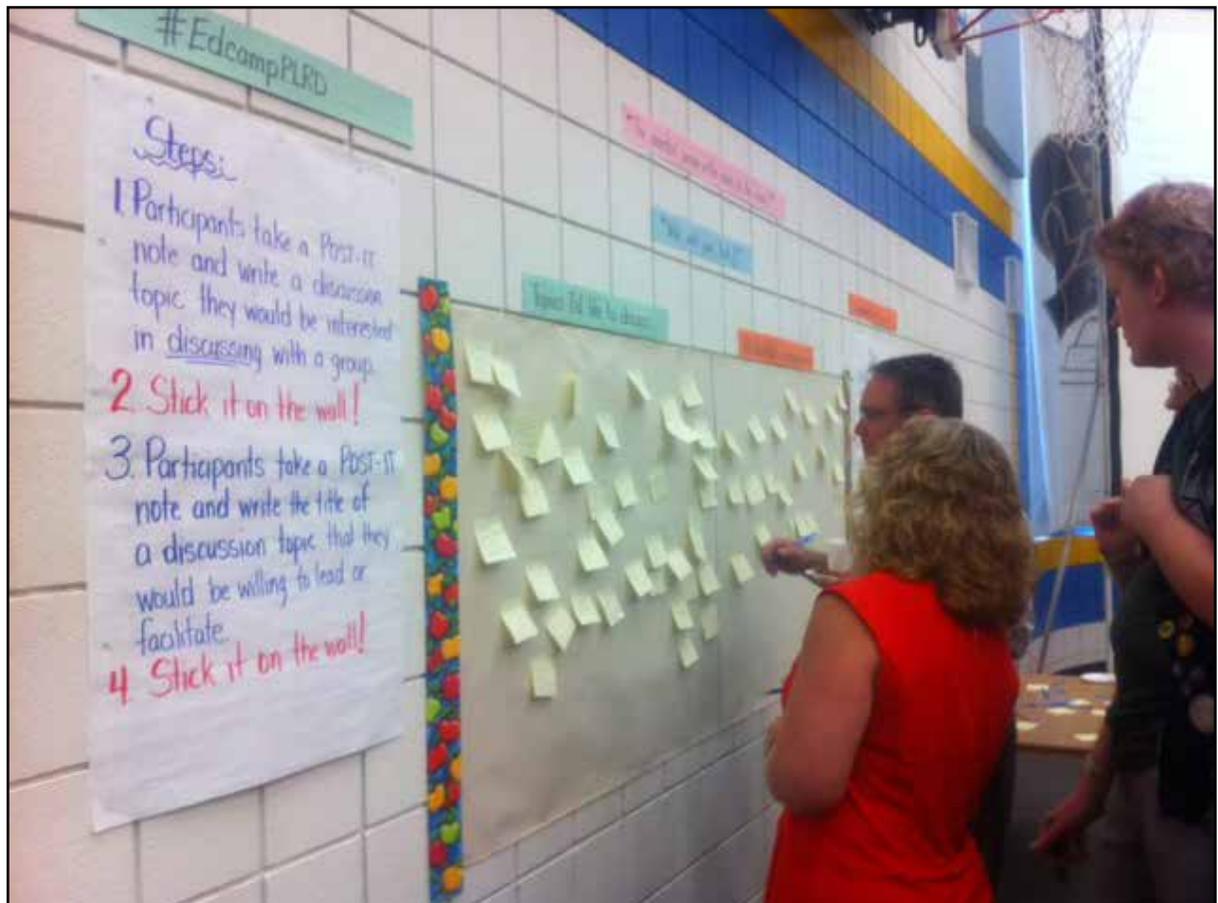
PD Cochair, Prairieland Local #36, Prairie Land Regional Division #25

Faced with the daunting task of planning and implementing a divisionwide PD day at the end of August, we launched the idea of planning an EdCamp for the entire division. Time and finances were short, but the collective pedagogical talent in our division is deep.

Having experienced the concept of “Open Spaces” at many a PDAC, Kelly Lewis (PLRD PD cochair) and I researched the idea of EdCamp and introduced the idea to our division PD Committee—a group of lead teachers who represent grade and subject areas as well as each of the schools in our small, widespread rural school division.

We described EdCamp: teacher directed, teacher led, teacher inspired. We shared a TED talk as well as a white paper prepared by Kristin Swanson (@Kristenswanson), a pioneer in the field of EdCamps. My cochair and I were met by a herd of deer in the headlights: Were we kidding? Were we serious? Give up the comfort of having a set plan, motivational speakers and paid presenters? What if the day is a disaster? What if no one shares?

EdCamps have been taking place all over North America since 2010, and were formally introduced in Alberta this past spring (2013). #EdCampYYC (April 2013) and #RedCamp13 (May 2013) were the first of their kind in our province. These (un)conferences included educators from



many corners of the province, who voluntarily signed up for a weekend of PD and professional dialogue. We were going to mandate that our teachers participate as a Division PD Day. Were we making a huge mistake? We could only wait and see.

We encountered a couple of speed bumps along the way. We invited a number of prominent educators to join us; the date and distance proved difficult. At our first EdCamp, teachers were eager to approach the board and suggest topics for discussion; the number of teachers willing to facilitate the discussions was much smaller. We reminded people that *facilitate* is not the same as *present*, and there is no pressure for one person to be the expert in the room. In fact, we have tried to adopt David Weinberger's phrase "Experts are everywhere, and the smartest person in the room is the room." The flexibility of "vote with your feet" was a fresh concept, putting the responsibility for learning back in the hands of the teachers themselves—if the discussion is not going in a direction that is beneficial to you, no one will be offended if you get up and find a more relevant conversation. Open spaces were available for teachers to meet for unscheduled conversations.

Teachers left that afternoon feeling energized and motivated. Evaluation surveys collected show that our first #EdCampPLRD was a success, with a strong desire to have more EdCamp sessions at the next PD day, at the end of September. In response to comments on the evaluations, we put the suggestion board online, and asked for topic requests two weeks in advance so that participants could prepare materials. Many suggestions were made, but we were still short on willing facilitators. Even so, we put together a schedule of topics that showed a high interest level.



That PD day we had a functioning schedule with the option of adding more discussion topics as the day progressed. During the lunch break we found that all new suggestions made were posted on the "I am willing to facilitate" side of the board, with times and meeting spaces already designated. Evaluations from that day show a high degree of satisfaction with the EdCamp philosophy—professional development that is teacher inspired, teacher driven, and teacher led. We have more teachers who are willing to come forward to facilitate a session, and a keen desire to have more EdCamps in PLRD. We made a great choice.

