

April 3rd, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

The 40th annual Saskatchewan Reading Council Conference was held in Saskatoon March 27th and 28th, 2009. The conference was rich in opportunity for networking as well as gaining knowledge of new research and classroom practices in the field of reading.

The keynote speaker, Mr. Damian Cooper, spoke of both current and past assessment practices as well as what current research says about student achievement using both teacher made and standardized tests. He focused on eight big ideas to improve learning for all students with the main focus being on shifting educational perspective from assessing for learning versus assessing of learning.

The first break out session I attended was Developing Vocabulary presented by Dawn Reithaug. Dawn led discussion on the importance of vocabulary as well as assessing vocabulary in the classroom. Research based methods for developing vocabulary was suggested and hands on ideas and materials were shared to take back to the school.

The second break out session I attended was on Collaborative Team Meetings: Addressing the Literacy Needs of All Learners. A format for working in grade groupings on the RTI (Response to Intervention) model was presented through a video presentation and discussion. This was a very informative session as our school division has expressed a desire to work on the intervention model this fall.

The final break out session I attended presented by Sylvia McNicoll, a Saskatchewan author, on Ten Top Tips to Get Kids Writing Better and Longer. She presented ten strategies she has found helpful when working with teachers and students as a writer in residence in schools across Canada.

Overall the information presented at the Reading Council Conference was interesting and practical. In my opinion it is a conference geared greatly at any literacy teacher and I look forward to taking it in other years.

Sincerely,

Lynn Anderson
Twin Lakes Community School
Literacy/Numeracy Support; Resource Teacher

I attended the first half of an Accreditation seminar in Regina this past March 13th & 14th. I will have to go back down for the second half at the end of April. I am working on my accreditation in Mathematics.

Day 1:

We started off with a welcome and introduction activity then moved onto learning communities and discussed how these learning communities support us as teachers. We then moved on to achievement targets and assessment tools.

I found this interesting because as a teacher you often feel that you are alone in your methods but after this activity it was nice to see that teachers from all over the province were doing the exact same things as the rest of us depending on the subject they taught.

We spent the afternoon in groups of peers in the same discipline and discussed issues specific to our teaching areas. I find the discussion often gets a bit off topic but that is when it is the most interesting and the most information is shared.

Day 2:

We spent the morning going through various examples of formative assessment- exams, assignments etc. Our group- one of the Math groups- was given an exam to

mark. We were given the marking scheme- but each one of us had a different result based on where we awarded marks or not for the amount of work that was shown. This was a perfect example of how we all have different ideas about assessment.

The afternoon was spent sharing different assessment tools we had brought to the

seminar to share with each other. We were to bring copies for everyone- which was great as I was able to collect a lot of material to use in my own classroom.

As I mentioned before this is only the first half of the seminar. We were given a homework assignment that I have been slowly working on. We have to do a presentation of an journal entry or article specific to assessment in our field.

It is a long drive from Buffalo Narrows to Regina- but it will be worth all the driving once I am able to write my own 30 level finals!!

Meagan Briske
Twin Lakes C.S.
Buffalo Narrows, Sk
306.235.4240

“Putting the Pieces Together” Reading Council Conference 2009-03-30

This conference celebrated its 40th Anniversary and proved to be a great success. The key note Damian Cooper inspired educators to empower student on their own learning path. In comparing teaching to baseball he suggests not marking everything but allowing students time to “practice.” Then when it comes to the points that count or “the big game” the students know what they will be marked on and try their best. He also stressed that instead of having a normal bell curve educators should strive for emphasis on all students succeeding and thus emphasized “re-teaching” sections of the formal tests that were not well done. A light bulb moment for me was rather than highlighting sections for students to edit or revise I will have students record their writing assignments and hopefully “hear” and catch some errors before they submit them to me.

I was able to network with representatives from the publishing companies in Saskatchewan. They will be sending sample boxes of

Aboriginal/Saskatchewan/Canadian literature for grades 10-12 for me to browse and order. I also did a presentation called “Technology – How to use it to your best advantage.” They couldn’t get the internet working so I had to present without the internet! Talk about stress! However I managed to do a decent presentation and actually had an educator from the Saskatoon Open Door Society in Saskatoon approach me to present at their PD day.

Kona Bryson – edcentre.ca

La Ronge

2008/2009 Professional Development for Meghan Buckle
(PreCam Community School, La Ronge, SK - Technology)
One Week Intensive French Immersion
Centre for Language: University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, SK August 4-9, 2008

Since I started teaching five years ago, I have taught several grade levels. This school year, I will be the Technology teacher at PreCam Community School. As we are a dual track school, with both English and French Immersion programs available, I will be teaching students in Kindergarten to Grade 6 in either French or English, depending on which classroom it is. I have not had to speak French in a number of years. Not since high school. Just like many students at our school, I was also in a French Immersion program in elementary school. However, in order to teach computer literacy to students in French and English, I felt the need to brush up on my French language skills a bit. The One Week Intensive French Immersion course at the University of Saskatchewan was perfect for that. We spent the mornings refreshing our French grammar skills, and the afternoons were dedicated to oral proficiency in the language, which meant many conversations and debates with my other classmates. We also got to participate in a dance workshop one morning that focused on French Folk Dancing. Having taken this course, I now feel much more confident in my abilities to instruct in the French language.

SRC Conference

I recently attended the SRC Conference in Saskatoon. It was a pleasure to attend.

The keynote speakers were of course knowledgeable but gave classroom ready ideas that would help any teacher, either just beginning or a more seasoned teachers.

I was dissapointed that Karen Hume was unable to attend, due to sickness. However, Lynn

Taylor Roehm filled in for her and did a presentation called "Six Ways to Make Your Literacy Blocks Do More". It was very informational.

Damien Cooper was excellent when he gave his presentation concerning assessment. Once again lots of information and thought provoking ideas.

The breakout sessions offered quite a variety. I attended the sessions given by Dawn Reitaug concerning vocabulary developement. Her ideas were very classroom oriented and can easily be used by any teacher.

The whole conference was well organized and seemed to run quite smoothly.

Elizabeth Cassell

Vision and the Principles in the Early Learning Workshop
Travelodge Hotel
Prince Albert, Sask.
January 17, 2009

I went to this workshop out of interest to myself to see how important relationships are to the process of connecting and incorporate to learning. First of all, we need to make sure we develop relationships with the child and the parent and to make sure they feel valued in our program. We need to have an open door attitude so that the parents will feel that they are welcome to come and talk about their child's learning and social growth. There are many avenues to ensure that all players feel welcome, useful and important. The "BIG" word here is "Valued" and how well we do portray that feeling to the folks we are serving. Or are we making the students feel that they should try to fit into our program when we should be making the programming fit everyone's needs to the best of our ability.

We were given ideas and resources that will help us develop and understanding and explore key ideas that give directions which are sensitive to the culture and context that was built on research and practice.

WE had discussions on valuing our children as successful learners and the role we have as educators in making sure that our children stay safe and happy. But also in ways the child/ren see the world and it's surrounding.

All in all it was a workshop where we could share our ideas and learn new ideas to help our children succeed in their learning environment where ever it may be.

Submitted by Bev Cheechoo
Teacher@ Charlebois Community School
Cumberland House, Sask.
February 25, 2009

N.A.T.A. Professional Development Assistance Report

I attended the Saskatchewan Reading Council Conference in Saskatoon on March 27th and 28th, 2009. This year's theme was "Putting the Pieces Together – Literacy: A colourful pattern of unique pieces we put together to educate the whole child". All 3 keynote sessions were informative, as were the breakout sessions.

Damian Cooper's presentation titled "Talk About Assessment: Eight Big Ideas to Improve Learning for All Students" was excellent. He discussed the changing goals in assessment in terms of ensuring success for all students. This involves assessment 'for learning' rather than 'of learning' thus using assessment to give feedback for learning, rather than just for grades. He also discussed shifting from norm-referenced to criteria-referenced assessment. He touched on ideas such as backward planning to help focus on what kids MUST know and be able to do, as well as to be pro-active regarding students you know will struggle ahead for.

Lynne Taylor-Roehm presented on "Six Ways to Make Your Literacy Block Do More". She discussed organization, motivation, assessment, differentiation, collaboration, and integration. It was a good reminder of some of the basic elements that need to be in place in order to be most effective.

Sue Jackson presented on Balanced Literacy. This was a good review and clarification of what each element of a balanced literacy program includes and focuses on.

I really enjoyed Dawn Reithaug's session on developing vocabulary. She provided information regarding the importance of vocabulary instruction as well as practical ideas in a hands-on format.

As always, the conference had many excellent speakers and was well-organized. I would readily recommend this conference to colleagues.

Marla Fitzpatrick
Pre Cam School

Northern Area Teachers' Association

A Conference for Beginning Teachers

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation presented a new teacher conference at the end of October. There were several useful presentations intended to guide and assist first and second year teachers. I would like to talk specifically about two sessions that I attended during this conference. The first was a presentation on financial management. This meeting was beneficial for any young, beginning teacher who is managing income and payments for the first time. Strategies, tips and ideas presented during this session were clear, informative, practical and extremely useful. The second session I would like to mention was based on health and wellness. The facilitator was excellent at probing the audience for various wellness issues facing new teachers. This served to be an excellent way of networking with other educators in Saskatchewan. We talked about how to cope with stress, the importance of time management, how to acquire classroom resources and many other issues facing a beginning teacher. Overall, I was impressed with the organization of the conference and the wide variety of sessions offered to help new teachers to Saskatchewan.

Bryan Kosmack
LLCS – Dene Building

Promising Practices Symposium
First Nations and Metis Education
April 1st and 2nd, 2009-04-03

Key note Speaker

Willie Ermine is from the Sturgeon Lake First Nation in the North Central part of Saskatchewan. His master of education thesis is titled: *A Critical Examination of the Ethics of Research involving Indigenous Peoples (2000)* Willie is a faculty member with the First Nations University of Canada and lectures in the areas of Humanities and Indigenous Studies. His continued residence and participation in the community provides him with the grounding and perspectives in his duties and approach to work in the mainstream.

Promising Practices Guiding Responsive Systems for Aboriginal Learning

Ted Amendt, Director of First Nations and Métis Education; **Sakej Henderson: James [Sákéj] Youngblood Henderson**, I.P.C., Research Director, Native Law Centre of Canada, College of Law; **Debora Simpson**, 30 years experience living and working in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories in the fields of education and human resource development with specific expertise in project management, curriculum development and facilitation. An essential starting point for evaluating the adequacy of any structured learning system is its responsiveness to the needs and goals of Indigenous learners and any evaluation of the system has to refer to the purpose(s) of the system. First Nations, Métis and Inuit participate in a variety of educational systems in Canada from early learning to post-secondary and in 'non-formal' community settings. Reconciling Canadian education systems with Aboriginal peoples' rights to education is to make a transforming and capacity-enhancing place for Aboriginal students. This session seeks to share current promising practices particularly in the areas of:

- ☞ governance, policy, curricula, and assessment,
- ☞ the role and practices of professionals and practitioners, and
- ☞ the application of various technological innovations which are a aspect of modern approaches to learning

that have generated successful outcomes for Aboriginal learners.

Indigenizing the Curriculum for Student Success

Dr. Helen Armstrong, Faculty of Education, Brandon University; **Olivia Murdock**, Teacher Sioux Valley Dakota Nation; **Roxanne Barker**, Birdtail Sioux First Nation.

Brandon University in Partnership with five First Nation communities from South-western Manitoba

The primary goal of our SSHRC/CURA project entitled *Community Based Aboriginal Curriculum Initiatives: Implementation and Evaluation* is to examine the impact of Aboriginal cultural instruction in selected schools in terms of learning, school attendance, and retention of Aboriginal students. The research involves assessing the effect of bringing Aboriginal artist-educators into participating schools, with particular attention to cognitive skills, cultural awareness, psychosocial development, identity, and self-esteem of Aboriginal students. The hypotheses is that exposure to Aboriginal culture in the school will improve Aboriginal children's cultural awareness and identity, and that, in turn, will increase the personal relevance and importance of the school, which then will translate into positive school-related behaviours and achievement. This presentation will provide an overview of the project, which is now in its fifth year.

Toolbox for Success & Learning Circles: Aboriginal Learners and Partners

Presenter: **Kory Wilson**, Department Chair of Aboriginal Studies, Langara College, Vancouver, BC.

"Freedom through Knowledge", the motto of Langara College, is the foundation of the Toolbox for Success and Learning Circles. This innovative Aboriginal approach to education is designed to encourage, support, facilitate and ensure success for Aboriginal learners. The Toolbox for Success and Learning Circles is holistic approach which requires community engagement. It is practical, community specific and community driven. The Tools and Circles are culturally-sensitive and developed with integrity in consultation with students and the community.

Reclaiming the Learning Spirit

Presenters: **Rita Bouvier**, Coordinator of the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre based at the offices of the University of Saskatchewan, College of Education, Aboriginal Education Research Centre; **Kathleen Flanagan**, Coordinator of the Adult Learning Knowledge Centre, University of New Brunswick in Fredericton, New Brunswick; **Genevieve Fox**, Coordinator of the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium, Calgary;

This presentation provides a synthesis of insights emerging from an invitational roundtable titled *Reclaiming the Learning Spirit*, which took place in Saskatoon in March 2008. The roundtable, a collaboration of the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre and the Adult Learning Knowledge Centre, was organized to highlight Aboriginal adult learners' experiences, discuss systemic barriers, and identify promising practices. The presentation addresses the need for change within educational programs, and shares promising approaches to support Aboriginal adult learners and their communities as they reclaim the learning spirits

Minahik Waskahigan School

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Summary Report

Professional Development Attendance at the S R C Conference 2009 – Putting the Pieces Together, Saskatoon Inn, March 26-28

To: Elaine Greschner, N. A. T. A., La Ronge, SK greschner@cableronge.sk.ca
From: Magi McFadden, Resource Teacher, Minahik Waskahigan School
Regarding: Mileage Expense Claim Application for Professional Development
Date: March 31, 2009

As a component of my professional development for the 2008-2009 school year, I have attended a conference directly relevant to my current teaching assignment as high school resource teacher (Grade 6-12) at Minahik Waskahigan School in Pinehouse Lake, Saskatchewan. The annual Saskatchewan Reading (Special Subject) Council's (SRC) conference, which was well worth attending, was held at the Saskatoon Inn Thursday Evening, March 26, 2009; Friday AM and PM, March 27, 2009; and Saturday AM and PM, March 28, 2009. I participated in a majority of the conference events including:

- keynote speakers – Damian Cooper and Sue Jackson;
- featured speaker – Sarah Womble;
- literary evening – Larry Krause, Bernadette Gruel and Morley Thorpe;
- breakout sessions – Magi McFadden and others;
- informal conversations with colleagues during body breaks;
- vendor displays of published materials for use with students – Scholastic, Eagle Crest, Wintergreen, Portage and Main, Gumdrops, Spectrum, SEDA, Pearson, Read Naturally, Nelson Education, Willow Awards, IRA Conference, etc.;
- SRC annual general meeting; and
- SRC executive meeting.

Keynote and featured speakers presented reading instruction methods to assess and motivate students to read independently. The literary evening emphasized the importance of poetry and (country) music lyrics into reading instruction. Concurrent sessions also included presentations about varied aspects of reading instruction. As a participant and speaker, I presented two sessions entitled, *Improving Learning Outcomes: Using Graphic Organizers to Develop Vocabulary and Increase Reading Comprehension (K-12)*. I spoke to other teachers about instruction in reading. I browsed vendor displays and queried vendors about their educational products. I also attended the annual general SRC breakfast meeting which focused on administrative aspects of the SRC. At the SRC executive luncheon, I was elected to serve as an SRC executive for the 2009-2010 school year. I assume the position of Query editor July 1, 2009, a position I have held in the past. My name was drawn for a door prize which I have added to our school resource room collection of professional literature. The acquisition (door prize) is entitled, *Three Tiers of Instruction and Intervention for Reading (2009) by Dawn Reithaug*. Benefits to students accrue from the information imparted by keynote speakers, featured speakers, concurrent session speakers, guest authors, vendors, SRC executive and delegates. The drive to and from Saskatoon was worthwhile professionally for me and academically for the students I teach.

Paradise in the Middle – Middle Years Conference

Keynote Speaker – Dale Nikkel – Dale is a former teacher. He has written many songs about being a teacher, and he sang his songs to us. The songs were about teacher burnout, supervision (the smoke patrol) and making a difference. His main message was that as teachers we “plant a tree” which “grows into a forest.” This was very entertaining and truthful. It helped me revitalize and become mentally prepared for the conference.

Keynote Speaker - Rick Herrig – Rick was an impromptu keynote, as the original keynote was unable to make it. Rick talked about getting on the bus, and how as professionals, if we are willing to try new things our classroom and school will be a better learning environment. It was an interactive keynote, which made it fun and exciting. Rick even came out dressed in a grass skirt, leis and a coconut bra.

Session 1: Renewed Middle years Social Studies Curricula – This was a session on the new Social Studies curricula. It was very informative and we even previewed the curricula. This new curricula looks to be more enjoyable to teach, and is easier to understand. I was very impressed that several of the outcomes are about First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples.

Session 2: Classroom Management: No Tears, No Fears – This session gave me plenty of ideas to try in my classroom and even reminded me of strategies I used to do. I felt that this was the best session of all.

Session 3: Making it Work in the Middle – This session gave lots of neat ideas on how to build relationships with your students. Many of these strategies were realistic and tried out in real classrooms multiple times. They gave us blackline masters to some of the activities, in case we wanted to try some out.

Session 4 – Touching Spirit Bear – This was a presentation on a thematic unit on the book, Touching Spirit Bear that was developed by Saskatchewan teachers. We were given a copy of the unit and hopefully soon I will be able to teach this unit to my students.

Overall, this was the best Professional Development that I have ever gone to, I plan to try new conferences next year and return to this one very soon.

July, 2008

To whom it may concern,

This year has been the first year I have taught cosmetology, so for my professional development I decided to take make-up lessons to allow me to brush up on my skills since it has been over ten years since I took my cosmetology training. I attended the course on May 23, 2008 in Saskatoon at The Make –Up Studio. Our time was spend practicing and discussing the different techniques and products used for day/night make-up application as well as make up for the seasons new trends.

This opportunity was practical and it was definitely something that I was able to take and use directly in class. It was by far the most fun professional development opportunity I have ever had. I wish all professional development was this useful.

Thank you for helping with the expense of the mileage, it is truly appreciated.

Jody Nagyl

I attended the First Nations Language Keepers Conference December 4 and 5 in Saskatoon. The conference was organised by the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre. The conference was well attended by over 300 delegates and presenters.

There was a good variety of presenters from Saskatchewan, Canada and the United States. They were First Nations peoples who have university education. The main theme I kept hearing was the danger that first nation languages are in all over the globe and the need to reverse the trend is more critical than ever.

The workshops contained a good selection of ways to educate and to reinvigorate languages at home and in the schools. Unfortunately, some of the methods that would interest youth at the middle years is costly. I felt that the workshops that focussed on language learning and retention strategies were more applicable as something that I was able to more easily bring back to my classroom.

I would like to express my gratitude to the school for sponsoring me to attend the conference. The areas of Cree language and Culture are very important to me, a non-First Nations person adopted by the people. I continue to try to incorporate the language, values and customs into my classroom with more emphasis after attending the conference.

Christine Ravenis
Churchill Community School

Entering the Professional Community: A Conference for Beginning Teachers

My experiences at the conference in Saskatoon were both positive and disappointing. I was really looking forward to many of the seminars, and like many first year teachers, was looking to make sure I was on the right track.

I found the keynote speakers to be knowledgeable and entertaining. I learned quite a bit and found myself inspired by their words. It was definitely a nice way to begin the day.

My favourite seminar was about money. For many first year teachers, including myself, it is the first time I have a steady income, as well as benefits. I am not listed on my family's policy anymore, so it was very informative about how to deal with benefits, life insurance, and other policies. Also, it was great to learn about the best ways to pay off loans, as well as save. I was really looking for a formula, and I found the seminar to give exactly that. It was well worth my time.

While I found most of the experiences positive, I was disappointed to find little to no information or seminars about ESL students, or teaching in the north. As a first year teacher in La Loche, it is a struggle to feel like you are doing an adequate job of teaching. I think a seminar on strategies about teaching students with ESL – especially high school students, who are often neglected in seminars – would be widely received by many northern teachers, as well as other teachers across the province.

Lisa Rosenberger
La Loche Community School, Dene Building

N.A.T.A. Professional Development Report

Submitted by Russ Wanner
Twin Lakes Community School
March 30/09

Re: Canadian Forces Influencer Conference
March 26 – 27/09
Manitou Springs
Watrous, Saskatchewan

The conference focused on preparing counsellors to facilitate the registration process for students who are interested in participating in one of the many programs the Canadian Armed Forces has to offer.

The conference participants were introduced to the various aspects of the reserves and regular armed forces programs. The many job opportunities and job descriptions available with the army, air force and navy were presented. Prerequisites for these various jobs with regard to academics and physical fitness were discussed.

Of particular interest were the many scholarship and financially assisted training opportunities available to students. The procedures for both the technical and university training programs were presented. In addition the Bold Eagle and Raven summer programs for Aboriginal youth were explained. The conference participants were also made aware of the Aboriginal Leadership Opportunity Year which is a on-year program that is offered at the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC) and provides a preparatory educational and leadership experience for Aboriginal candidates.

The conference participants were also given a presentation by an RCMP recruiter. He explained the working relationship the RCMP have with the Canadian Forces recruiters. The RCMP representative also elaborated on the various job and training opportunities in the RCMP as well as explained the recruiting and registration process.

This conference was an excellent resource for preparing career counsellors to help answer student's questions about opportunities in the Canadian Armed Forces and the RCMP. The new recruit registration process is quite lengthy and thorough and it was good that the presenters had us go through it step by step so that we would be better able to assist the students who may apply.

Professional Development Report:
Penny Settee

March 31, 2009
Charlebois Community School

I attended the Saskatchewan Reading Council Conference in Saskatoon on March 26-28. It began on Thursday evening with a western theme of author's reading of prose and poetry and singing. One was reminded of how songs are actually poetry in music. Most of the songs were basically autobiographical in nature and therefore increased my knowledge of western culture. It was also comprised of Saskatchewan's own talent. A bonus!

On Friday and Saturday, the conference was organized into several large group sessions and break out sessions. The first keynote address was on Six Big Ideas on Assessment. This workshop reminded me about the importance of the affective domain during assessment and highlighted the importance of including students in the process to insure they see the value of assessment of their own learning. Other speakers talked about using assessment strategies which would give students opportunities which were more multisensory and catered to their learning styles.

A representative from the International Reading Council brought greetings and presented a message about the importance of input from everyone to develop and nurture the whole child. The analogy of 'put the pieces of the quilt together' was reinforced throughout. Each speaker examined the methods each member could use while working with the common purpose in mind of continually improving student learning. As the carefully selected pieces of quilt come together to form a protective covering over the user, so does the learner as he becomes equipped with the strategies he will utilize. Selection is key, as the quilt becomes a beautiful tapestry of artful consisting of intricate delicate pieces to form a beautiful array, equally important is it necessary to select research based strategies which reflect function, meaning and relevance. Each child is unique; just as some crazy patch quilts. A cookie cutter design is no longer the answer for beauty or for student learning.

Often the most important thing about attending a conference is what one takes away. After going to Dawn Reithaug's make and take session, I know the folder will be a valuable addition to the learning resource room. Dawn Reithaug's vocabulary session also provided strategies. Her books are filled with ideas and cue cards which help to increase organizational skills for both students and teachers. A tip I learned to increase student writing is to require they write down all their requests. I also attended a session on increasing fluency skills using a program called One Minute Readers and won a door prize. Yippee! The program is being used in B.C. and the teachers promoting it are using it with parents.

I would highly recommend this conference to other teachers.

Saskatchewan Reading Conference
40th Annual Conference
“Putting the Pieces Together”
March 26-28, 2009

Literacy: A colorful pattern of unique pieces we put together to educate the whole child.

This year’s conference was planned by our local Kewetin Nene Reading Council, which started Thursday night with a Literacy Evening of music by Larry Krause, and poetry, prose and storytelling by Bernadette Gruel and Morley Thorpe.

Friday’s keynote speakers were Damian Cooper Damian and Lynn Taylor-Roehm. Damian Cooper’s presentation was on *Talk about Assessment*. He focused on eight big ideas to improve learning for all students.

1. Assessment serves different purposes at different times.
2. It must be planned and purposeful.
3. It must be balanced.
4. Assessment and instruction are inseparable because effective assessment informs learning.
5. For assessment to be helpful to students, it must inform them in words, what they have done well, what they have done poorly, and what they need to do to improve.
6. It is most effective when it involves self, peer, and teacher assessment.
7. Performance standards are an essential component.
8. Grading and reporting student achievement is a caring, sensitive process that requires teachers’ professional judgment.

Keynote speaker Karen Hume was sick so Lynn Taylor-Roehm’s presentation was on *Six Ways to Make Your Literacy Block Do More* and on Saturday the keynote address *Balanced Literacy* was by Sue Jackson.

Friday’s author luncheon featured Cathy Miller a well-known Canadian folksinger/songwriter and quilter and Corrine Bantle who presented her “*Bantle Quilt*” with each square represented by a different author or illustrators’ signature and work made into a huge quilt. After the breakout sessions on Friday there was a PAGES’ reception and author book signing. In the display area everyone enjoyed the cake being served to mark the 40th anniversary of the Saskatchewan Reading Council.

The breakout sessions on Friday and Saturday covered a variety of topics such as developing vocabulary, comprehension, reading, graphic organizers, diverse needs, illustrating, technology and many more. The AGM took place on Saturday morning and the business luncheon at the end of the conference. Peggy Plunz did a Power Point presentation on her attending the International Reading Association Convention in Phoenix, Arizona on February 21-25, 2009.

French Immersion Workshop

On sept. 16th, I went to PA with around 30 K to 10 teachers all from French Immersion Schools from throughout the province of Saskatchewan.

Holy Cross school allowed us to stay there for the day. We had a presentation on the new curriculum orientation. Now, the emphasis is made on students. Instead of saying that at the end of the year: "the student must know...", now we have to say: "the student should read..."

The inservice was really beneficial especially the time spent on exchanging methods, (e) the kind of book to read with the students and the kinds of activities to use etc...

We all agreed to meet for a second meeting at the same place on Nov. 25th.

André **SIRIEIX**

Churchill Community School

Save Your Sanity
Proactive Strategies for Challenging Children
Presenter: Colleen DeVeyrac

I attended a seminar called “*Save Your Sanity, Proactive Strategies for Challenging Children*” by Colleen DeVeyrac in Saskatoon on February 3, 2009. This seminar was an excellent professional development opportunity which gave participants a wealth of strategies and resources to use in their classrooms. Colleen was an engaging speaker, very dynamic, humorous, and personable. Participants were given a CD which contained the notes from the presentation and will be able to access Colleen’s blog which gives access to free resources as well as updates on new research and information.

The following points are some highlights from this seminar. Many of them were thought – provoking; others provided an “aha” moment.

- Think about what your definition is for discipline and punishment. These will form the basis of what you do in the classroom or at your school. All staff need to be on the “same page” to provide consistency.
- When giving consequences, always think, “What do we want the student to learn from this?”
- We need to be proactive rather than reactive.
- When teaching a student the type of behaviour that is expected, keep talking to a minimum, use a visual if possible, give them time to process what you have asked them to do, tell what the consequences might be....AND then you need to be a behaviour coach and practise the expected behaviour with them. Don’t expect them to get it right away! You may need to practise with them several times.
- Build rapport and develop a relationship with upcoming students before they are in your class. Just by saying “hello” can make a big difference for some kids.
- Avoid using control words and giving sharp directives such as NO! and STOP! Avoid gestures or body language showing disapproval. These will typically produce oppositional behaviours or will cause some students behaviour to escalate.
- Use a calm voice, talk to students at eye level or lower, position yourself beside them rather than in front and provide some sort of visual to focus on.
- Get them to change their brain to use another sense...Switch the topic to something totally different, like, “Do you smell popcorn? Let me check...I’ll be right back.” This makes the student change their thinking to use another sense and gives you an opportunity to step out, take a deep breath, and calm down before coming back to talk to the student about their behaviour.
- Explore dreams and goals of students in order for them to think about their future. Teach students about goal setting. Have them set short term goals and have them relate these to how these will help them achieve long term goals in their future.
- Having a PLAN is key. Plan for hyperactivity in your classroom.
- Teach students that everyone has the power to make their own decisions and choices. The choices you make about how to approach these obstacles and deal

with them will impact your success. For example, if a teacher asks a student to stop talking and get back to work, the student can respond by being quiet and getting back to work, or talking back to the teacher and refusing to work. The teacher then gets angry and sends the student out of class. The first response allows the student to get on with their life. The second response is actually a reaction which causes another situation. This in turn, can then result in many more situations occurring and it will be quite a while before the student will be able to “get on with their life.”Their decisions and choices are powerful.

Submitted by
Faye Tam
Gordon Denny Community School

Understanding & Supporting the Troubled Student/Classroom Management
STF Summer Short Course
August 5th 2008

Facilitated by Pam Beatty

When I signed up for this course I expected tips on how to deal with difficult students (i.e. oppositional, don't want to work) but instead the course was about dealing with special needs students (i.e. autism). I found that the course description was misleading because it was not what I expected to be covered by the facilitator. We mainly talked about how to work with tutors effectively to enable these students to achieve. As a new teacher I would have liked to have had a session covering how to deal with difficult students that do not have a tutor (i.e. how to motivate them, how to discipline them effectively). I found that the facilitator had too much information to cover effectively in a day which did not allow us to have constructive discussions. Because of this I took little practical information away from the course. I would suggest to the STF that they should break the course into two sections and perhaps even have it as a two-day session (in addition to being clearer in the course description about the content).

Teaching Spelling
STF Summer Short Course
August 6th 2008

Facilitated by Kathleen Davies

This was an interesting course about how to make spelling more interesting in the classroom. I found though that the facilitator was mainly trying to promote/sell her spelling resource and although we talked about different spelling strategies there was no discussion as to how it could be integrated into typical spelling units (i.e. Nelson's Speller). We spent the session going through her book and looking at different activities. I got some good ideas for activities and games that I could adapt to our school's spelling resource but as our school mandates the spelling resource used I found there was little use to buy her book on top of paying for the course. A suggestion for next time is that the STF should include the book in the price of the course.