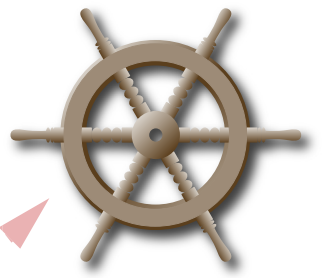


Charting Your Course FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Professional Development for the Contemporary Classroom

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The face of the teaching workforce is constantly changing. As more and more teachers retire, new recruits are being introduced to the classrooms of the 21st century. The vast majority of these early career teachers are what are known as the millennial generation—born after 1981. They are joined by well-known people such as Rex Goudie, Heather Strong and Sydney Crosby. The millennials want work that has meaning for them; they need a balanced work/home life, and they see continuous learning as a way of life. All of these things have an impact on the kinds of professional learning activities they are requesting.

Locals are encouraged to ask their new members to fill out a new member survey where they indicate the three PD sessions they would find most useful. Invariably, the results are almost always the same with management issues at the forefront. Early career teachers (as well as mid and late career teachers) are looking for strategies that will help them to better manage their classrooms. Sessions dealing with classroom management offer practical strategies for teachers who face issues ranging from disruptive behaviour to bullying. Workshops addressing issues of time management assist educators in assessing how they may make better use

of their limited time as the demands on their time keep increasing. Seminars on diversity management give members insight into how the changing demographics of our student population is having an impact on today's classroom. Issues relating to culture, race, gender, and sexual orientation are ever-present in our schools and teachers and administrators are looking for ways to make their work sites inclusive of everyone.

To ensure their lives have balance, millennials are increasingly requesting wellness workshops. Not only do they want more time to devote to family and friends (indicative by the number of requests for time management workshops mentioned above), but they also want to learn how to survive the changing workplace. Teacher wellness also includes sessions on stress management, ergonomics, and workplace balance, all of which help educators take better control of both their professional and private lives. Also, given the current economic times, it is not surprising that requests for financial planning are being made by younger teachers. Teachers should plan ahead so as not to reach retirement age only to find out that they are not fully prepared for it. The health and well-being of our younger teachers are vital if



Staff officer Gérard Cormier provides a time management workshop for the teaching staff at Highland Park Junior High School on February 24. The majority of the teachers at this school are beginning teachers, and Cormier is scheduled to present other PD sessions to the group.

they are to remain in the profession for any length of time.

Today's contemporary classrooms are equipped with technology not even heard of not that long ago. Although early career teachers grew up in the digital age, they require continuous professional learning to make optimum use of today's technologies. For some that will mean learning how to use Senteos in the classroom to get immediate student feedback. For others the question is how to best integrate new technologies into the classroom. New technologies also bring new challenges. New teachers

must be made aware of the problems associated with social networking sites, incorrect uses of the Internet, and cyber bullying, just to name a few.

The NSTU wants early career teachers to chart their course for professional development. The 2008-2009 PD offerings brochure outlines the many workshops mentioned in this article along with many others. NSTU staff officers facilitate these sessions free of charge to all NSTU members. Contact the NSTU if you are interested in professional development for your contemporary classroom.

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