



Issue # 7

February 13, 2008

NEWSLETTER OF THE DELTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

President's Column

What could be stranger than the bizarre happenings around the online component of the FSA, a component supposedly planned for some time?

- computers freezing and systems crashing everywhere;
- students being told not to double-click or they'll log out their entire class;
- students waiting two and three minutes between clicks for anything to happen;
- mismatched questions and text on the split screen
- students trying eight, nine, and more times to log on;
- BCeSIS system knocked out by FSA traffic (Delta has not yet signed on to BCeSIS, an electronic student information system);
- Tech support phone number out of service, and more!

When you combine the time students wasted in practicing the sample eFSAs online and the time spent trying to overcome technology issues when the "real" tests were being administered, it is no wonder that teachers have more reasons to dislike the FSA test and to distrust the results. At a time when elementary teachers are attempting to assess and evaluate their students in preparation for the writing of their second report cards, FSA exams waste valuable teaching and learning time and do nothing to inform teaching practice.

The BCTF Representative Assembly passed a motion that "Teachers be advised to not participate in the distribution of marked FSA booklets to parents." The DTA will provide teachers with printed information outlining teachers concerns about both the FSA and the proliferation of mandated testing for handing out to parents. Teachers are discouraged from volunteering to mark the written FSA booklet.

As Alice Barlow-Kedves, an English teacher at Chemanius Secondary School, wrote in an article to the Times Colonist: **"I think every teacher in the province would celebrate exams if they were shown to have direct positive impacts on the education and skills of all our students."**

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BCTF AGM DELEGATES

Listed below are Delta's BCTF AGM delegates and Local Reps.

David Bennett	Delview
Sukhy Dhillon	Hellings
Marianne D'Souza	TOC
Andrea Dulay	Jarvis
Michael Granum	Jarvis
Simon Isbister	SDSS
Richard Kirincic	SDSS
Mary-Lou Lexier	Hellings
Ryan Logan	SDSS
Elen Nikas	Sands
Tashi Papau	SDSS
Dinah Phillips	Pinewood
Alison Roche	Richardson
Paul Steer	DTA
Chris Yang	SDSS

Alternate:

Reece Papin	Seaquam
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Local Representatives:

Jacquie Schierer	Hellings
Pat Truelove	Sands
Phyllis With	Cliff Drive

The PD Perspective

Jacquie Schierer, PD Chairperson



Teacher Inquiry: A Defining Feature of Professional Practice

By Anthony Clarke and Gaalen Erickson

As Lewison (2003) notes, *teacher inquiry* involves:

... a generally agreed upon set of insider research practices that promote teachers taking a close, critical look at their teaching and the academic and social development of their students. ... Although known by many names – teacher research, action research, practitioner research, insider research – teacher inquiry involves classroom teachers in a cycle of inquiry, reflection, and action. In this cycle, teachers question common practice, approach problems from new perspectives, consider research and evidence to propose new solutions, implement these solutions, and evaluate the results, starting the cycle anew. (p. 100)

Furthermore, it is important to note that *teaching inquiry*, as articulated above, is **research**. We emphasize the word ‘research’ to deliberately signal that *teacher inquiry* is a systematic and rigorous process for teachers to explore what they do and how they do it, and to share those inquiries with their colleagues (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1993). The word ‘research’ here is consistent with the type of activities that Hargreaves (2000) uses to delineate between the pre-professional and professional phases in the history of teaching. In the professional phases – characterized by a recognition of complexity and uncertainty – Hargreaves argues that, now more than ever, it is imperative for teachers to engage in systematic and sustained inquiry that “lifts teachers out of the pre-professional prejudice that only practice make perfect” (p. 167). Failure to do this, Hargreaves cautions, will result in deprofessionalization forces wresting control of curricula and pedagogical practices from teachers – witness recent calls for centralized curricula, system-wide testing regimes, the standards movement, etc. (Hargreaves 2000).

In short, inquiry is a defining feature of professional practice. We argue that without inquiry, one’s teaching practice becomes perfunctory or routinized, duplicative or imitative. When teachers cease to be inquisitive about their practice or the circumstances in which they work prevent such inquiries then their practice ceases to be professional.

BC Educational Leadership Research
June 2006

Paid Education Leave for 2008-2009

Teachers interested in making application for Paid Education Leave (60%) for the 2008-2009 school year are instructed to contact the Human Resources Division to request the required application form.

Please review Article C14 of the Collective Agreement to ensure eligibility.

Deadline for submission of completed application is MARCH 31, 2008

TOC Meeting & Workshop

The meeting scheduled for February 28th has been postponed.

Please mark your calendars for the rescheduled TOC meeting. **Wednesday, April 9th, 4:00 pm at the Resource Centre.** The new workshop “*Reality 101*” has been booked. Please RSVP by phone, 604 946-0391, or email, deltateachers@telus.net.

Job Share Meeting

Teachers interested in job sharing in the 2008-2009 school year are invited to an information meeting **Thursday, March 6th, at 4:00 pm at the DTA office.** Job share approvals have to be renewed annually.

The DTA Social Justice Committee is once again proud to sponsor...

"Delta Schools Break Bread for Afghani Women"



Breaking Bread for Women in Afghanistan is a volunteer fundraising project to support education for Afghan women and girls, by holding Pot Luck Dinners across Canada. Each \$750 CDN raised covers the cost of one teacher's salary for a year in Afghanistan! Be on the look out for more information to follow soon. Let's see how many teachers Delta can hire!