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Master of Education Newsletter

Fall 2014 VOL 3 NO 4



Faculty of Education

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Welcome to Fall 2014!

This summer members of our faculty spent time with Dr. Michael Power from Laval University who provided us with an overview of online learning and its growing potential in universities. Dr. Power spoke of the 'massification' of higher education worldwide in which there will be a 314% increase in access to higher education over the next 10 years. The challenge will be to increase accessibility to education while maintaining quality and relevance. Online learning provides a path for achieving these goals. In his overview Dr. Power demonstrated how there is a history of outreach learning dating as far back as the early Greek scholars who left their cities and travelled into the countryside to reach their students. He reminded us of the evolution of distant learning from the use of audiotapes, television courses, VHS tapes, to videoconferencing, computer-based training and online learning. As each new technology develops educators must examine the costs involved, the level of accessibility the platform provides and, perhaps most important from our point of view as educators, the level of learner interactivity and engagement. Dr. Power spoke enthusiastically about blended learning which can combine elements of online synchronous courses and pieces of online asynchronous courses. An integral component of good blended learning is that both part-time faculty and regular faculty are involved in this kind of teaching.

Continuing and Distance Education at StFX were early adopters of distance and online learning and we are among the pioneers in this learning in the Atlantic area. We have been fortunate in our Masters program to have excellent pedagogical and technical support for both our online instructors and students. Wendy Kraglund-Gauthier and Farnoush Zadeh have provided hands-on instructional support and design to faculty members as they have learned to master the tools of the online world. As instructors we have created learning communities in which we share best practices in online teaching. This year we are scheduling regular learning community meetings and building a Moodle site that allows all instructors to share and access teaching resources and ideas. In doing this we remain true to our commitment to provide high quality graduate education that models excellence in teaching.

Please note that we are pleased that this Fall our online course evaluation system is being improved through the use of Explorance Blue. This system is a vast improvement over our previous system and will provide better feedback in a more timely matter to course instructors. Your feedback matters so I urge you to complete course evaluations in each course.

Your feedback as learners can help enrich and shape our teaching. You will receive a link to an online survey very shortly which will ask you to provide feedback about the kinds of teaching/learning strategies that engage you as an online learner. Please take a moment and fill it out. Please note that this is not an evaluation of instructors nor is it a course evaluation. The information about teaching and learning will help shape our professional learning as instructors.

Dr. Joanne Tompkins, Chair, Department of Curriculum and Leadership

Have you applied for Fall 2014 Convocation?



**Convocation
Ceremony
Saturday
December 6th**

**Have you
registered for
Winter & Spring
Session?**

<http://www.sites.stfx.ca/continuingeducation/>

or

<http://tinyurl.com/pj9e698>

**Winter / Spring
Registration
remains open to all
eligible MED
students**



**Frustrated
when courses are
cancelled; register
early to avoid course
cancellation.**

Important Information

- **Apply to graduate:** All students intending to graduate must apply to do so. The application to graduate is located in your personalized mesAMIS account. Please note that a student cannot be considered a candidate for graduation unless an application has been submitted.
- **Please note:** Students enrolled in fall term courses are not eligible for Fall Convocation.
- **Registration for winter and spring** remains open to all eligible students. If you have not done so we ask that you **register as soon as possible**. Course offerings are contingent on enrollment numbers and courses may be cancelled (including core courses) if there is insufficient enrollment. Following is the link to our course offerings: http://sites.stfx.ca/continuingeducation/sites/sites.stfx.ca/continuingeducation/files/Fall%20Winter%202014-15%20Calendar_1.pdf
- Students are able to register for as many **EDUC 569s** (Selected Topics) as their elective requirements allow provided the course title of each is different.
- **X-ring eligibility** for our Program requires a total of 36 credits earned. X-ring is a Student Union initiative. Please contact the Student Union office directly regarding your eligibility at 902.867.2495. Please note that this is a change from previous policy.
- **Need assistance** selecting your courses? Please contact the program office for assistance at med@stfx.ca or 1.877.867.3906.
- **Teacher Reference Center: New Database** - we now have access to Teacher Reference Center as part of our database collection. You can view/try this new database from the following link: <http://libproxy.stfx.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?authtype=ip,uid&profile=ehost&defaultdb=trh>

Leading Equitable Assessment Practices Conference - November 6 & 7, 2014, Halifax, NS

<http://www.nselc.ednet.ns.ca/leading-equitable-assessment-practices-conference-august-11-12-2014.html>

Interested in a Summer Elective in Belize?

Contact Dr. Dan Robinson, Faculty of Education drobinso@stfx.ca



StFX Email Accounts:

Frustrated because your StFX email account has expired? TSG has addressed this problem by allowing students to have 'Self-serve Password Manager' which means you can control the activation of your email account. Please follow the guidelines in the tutorial provided on the following link: [Guides & Tutorials](#). With the webFX Self-serve Password Manager, you can activate your webFX account, reset your webFX password, update your webFX challenge questions, or unlock your webFX account.

Recent Research

Congratulations on the completion of a thesis or project to the following:

Thesis:

Costello, M. (2104). **How elementary language arts teachers make sense of literacy initiatives.**
Supervisor: Dr. Anne Murray Orr.

Project:

Waye, J. (2104). **Shinrin-Yoku [Forest Bathing] and the classroom.**
Supervisor: Dr. Margaret Olson.

Congratulations!

StFX Master of Education student receives honorable mention in Language and Literacy Researchers of Canada Master's Research Award Competition

Congratulations to Alanna Jamieson (MEd 2013) who received an honourable mention for her thesis - Which boys and which girls? Seeing beyond the gender gap in literacy. (Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Anne Murray Orr).

The major criteria for this award are excellence in research, creative and thoughtful representation of data and significance of the work for language and literacy education. All modes of inquiry and research are invited as are all modes of reporting. The submissions are examined for significance, substance, and distinctiveness by a panel of three experienced and active researchers in language education who are members of LLRC/CCAL.

STILL ROOM AVAILABLE in the following ONLINE Winter courses ...

- 508.68** – Critical Research Literacy in Education
- 536.67** – Program Development
- 569.68** – ST: Methods for Teaching English as an Additional Language (EAL) Learners
- 569.70** – ST: Special Topics in Science Edu K-12
- 569.71** – ST: Assessment for Learning
- 569.74** – ST: Global Education

(ST = Selected Topics in Education)



Technology Tips



Technical Support Tips Using Mobile Devices



Wondering whether your tablet or other mobile device will work in Collaborate? It probably will! You can use an Android device (including Kindle Fire HD), iPhone, or iPad after downloading the proper app. Once logged into your live session, you can:

- interact using text chat or your built-in device microphone (be sure to “allow” access)
- view the whiteboard and shared applications, in the main room and in breakout rooms
- communicate via emoticons, raise your hand, and respond to polls

Because of the device limitations, you are not able to move yourself to a breakout room (ask the moderator to move you!), write on the whiteboard (have someone transcript for you), or be given moderator status (ask a moderator to move slides during your presentation).

For more information and to download the app, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/9p7h5uc>

Contact Blackboard Collaborate Technical Support (Available 24/7):

- Call: Toll-free: 1-877-382-2293
- Web Resources (Including Live Chat): <http://tinyurl.com/6anp25y>



Online Teaching & Learning Tips & Tools Managing Moodle Discussions

One of the benefits of using Moodle can be found in its interactive features—especially the discussion forums. There are two main forum designs.



The News Forum: Your instructor may use the News Forum to send out messages to the class or to a particular group within the class. You will receive this message in your StFX email inbox and each message (and any attachments) is also available in Moodle. You cannot add a discussion thread to a News Forum post.

The Discussion Forum: These discussions are designed to encourage critical and reflective thinking, and often are opportunities to learn from each other and share perspectives. To maximize the value of discussions, be sure to post *well before the deadline* so others have opportunities to read and respond to you. When making a post or commenting, you can adjust the “Subscription” option to send post comments and updates to your email or not.

For technical assistance with Moodle, contact cdsupport@stfx.ca and be sure to include your StFX email address and the course name.



Congratulations to members of the Halifax Leadership Cohort who completed their capping experience this summer with course instructors Elwin Leroux (who is also the Superintendent of the Halifax School Board) and Dale Armstrong (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development).



Graduate students in the Physical Education Cohort spent an active summer in July with instructor Brent Bradford.