



A Message from the Chair

Lazy, hazy days of summer are behind us now – not that the days were ever lazy for families living with LD ... well, maybe “hazy”. Our dedicated team of staff and volunteers at the national office continue their work unabated by the summer. As you will read in the following pages, there is a lot going on in our network with new initiatives, partnerships and pilot projects. More developments to come! Stay tuned!

Thealzel Lee
Chair, Learning Disabilities Association of Canada

A Message from the Executive Director

LDAC Annual General Meeting

On June 22nd, 2017 LDAC's held its Annual General Meeting, and I would like to extend a warm welcome to the following individuals nominated to the LDAC board of directors for 2017/2018:

Provincial/Territorial Representatives:

- British Columbia: Brendan O'Neill
- Alberta: Lorrie Goegan
- Saskatchewan: Debra Kemp-Koo
- New Brunswick: Rhonda Rubin

Directors at Large:

- Thealzel Lee - Chair
- Bob Cram – Secretary

We bid farewell to Lynne Wawryk-Epp (SK); Colette Charest (QC) and Millie Leblanc (Atlantic). Your invaluable contributions and expertise will be truly missed.

New Pilot Project with LDA BC

LDA BC invited LDAC and My Education Room Inc (MER) into a joint venture pilot project to deliver online professional development webinar-based workshops on teaching students with learning disabilities. The online webinar for teachers/professionals in BC will be available on the Non-Instructional Day (Professional Development Day) to take place on Friday, October 20th, 2017. The BC Guide to Learning Disabilities is a basis for the online content.

The workshop *‘A Day In the Life’* will look at LD from the viewpoint of a student and the challenges they face as they navigate the school day. The content is being developed by Kim McLean, an Instructional Coach at Calgary Academy, an LDAC PAC Member (Professional Advisory Council) who has also served as a



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Ministerial Appointee to the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards. Kim is a past recipient of the LDAC National Excellence in Education Award (2006) and was the LDAC representative in the 2016 regional selection process for the Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence.

Kim will include a combination of text, videos and lesson plans along with PDFs of resources teachers can use in their classroom. The four-hour webinar will be hosted on the *My Education Room* conferencing platform and a Certificate will be provided to attendees.

The goal of this pilot project is to provide online content on teaching students with LD but also to analyse the feedback received from participants to determine if LDAC should move forward to develop a new online LD Education Community made available across the country to all teachers/professionals/employers.

Claudette Larocque
Executive Director, Learning Disabilities Association of Canada
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Committee and Other Reports

Research Committee

The Research Committee would like to provide short features for the newsletter on Canadian research and researchers in the field of learning disabilities. This time we are featuring Dr. Gabrielle Young.

Dr. Young is an Assistant Professor in Special Education at Memorial University and a member of the Professional Advisory Council for the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada.

In her research on “**Examining Assistive Technology in Inclusive Classrooms within the Framework of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**”, Dr. Young examined:

- 1) how teachers incorporate assistive and instructional technology within instruction that is based on UDL principles,
- 2) the types of supports and struggles that are associated with doing so, and
- 3) students' reactions to learning in this context.

She interviewed and observed nineteen teachers – including classroom and resource teachers – to highlight innovative practices that effectively support student learning including:

- 1) presenting information in a variety of formats,
- 2) enabling students to demonstrate their knowledge in a variety of ways, and



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- 3) enabling all students in their class to use ministry licensed assistive technology in their class.

These teachers indicated that they have not received professional development in regards to UDL. However, they are learning about technology implementation through discourse with other teachers.

Dr. Young's study revealed that teachers need to:

- 1) be taught about available technologies and how they can be used to support student learning, and
- 2) know how to purposefully integrate technology as a means to provide multiple ways for students to learn and demonstrate their learning.

These findings are significant because using technology as tools to provide more flexible curriculum can make learning more accessible for students with and without learning difficulties.

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee has just started to prepare for what appears to be a very busy fall. In addition to producing the quarterly newsletter, we have several initiatives underway.

- providing advice and input into the development of a Case for Support that LDAC will use in fundraising activities
- assisting with the redevelopment of LDAC's website
- starting a planning process that involves working with provincial/territorial associations on how LDAC can better support them in promoting LD awareness month
- exploring the possibility of collaborating with the Canadian Mental Health Association to promote advocacy related to learning disabilities in the fourth quarter of 2018.

Bob Cram – Chair

Members: Lorrie Goegan, Brendan O'Neill, Claudette Larocque, Brent MacPherson, Doug Symington, Scott Patterson

Health and Environment News

Below are a few of the several files that the Health and Environment group have been involved in the past year:

- October 2016 - Prepared comments on behalf of LDAC on the review of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA), and provided this quote re the Parliamentary committee's recommendations: *'The developing brain, from early pregnancy into adulthood, has been shown to be a most sensitive health endpoint in risk assessments and*



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epidemiological studies measuring cognitive and behavioural effects. There needs to be mandatory language in the text of CEPA (not just the preamble) that recognizes and addresses the differential sensitivity of this subgroup in chemical assessments and risk management.'

- February 2017 - With the Canadian Environmental Law Association assisted in the preparation of a joint statement, signed by 50 Canadian health and environmental organizations regarding the government's proposed risk assessment and risk management of triclosan, urging that changes are needed to include action on TCS in personal care products such as soaps and antibacterial hand-washes. Involved peripherally in another round of discussions with Environment Canada and Health Canada on their assessment and RM proposal for triclosan.
- February 2017 - Provided comments to Health Canada on the proposed Consumer Products Containing Lead Regulations and the proposed amendments to the Children's Jewellery Regulations.
- April 2017 - Prepared comments on the government's risk assessment and proposed risk management for the glycol ethers, found to be non-toxic under CEPA, included a very recent epidemiological study showing neurobehavioral effects.
- June 2017 - Preparing a draft position statement for the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada regarding marijuana use in pregnancy and breast feeding. Contacted Health Canada regarding the need for this public information, received a reply from the Minister's office.

Barbara McElgunn, Volunteer Health Policy Advisor, LDAC
Lynn Green, Volunteer

Provincial/Territorial Updates

Quebec

2018 Congress, March 21-23, 2018

Opening of registrations: October 2 at noon

For more information on this event, click here:

<http://www.institutta.com/congres/congres-2018/>

Two parent seminars in 2017

Montreal : Père Marquette School : Saturday, November 4, 2017

Quebec City: La Camaradière High School: Saturday, September 25, 2017

For detailed programming, click here:



<http://www.institutta.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/5e-COLLOQUE-PARENTS-Programme-d%C3%A9tail%C3%A9-2017v5.pdf>

To register online, click here:

<https://www.eiseverywhere.com/ereg/newreg.php?eventid=270524&>

Annual Fundraiser Evening, 2017 Evening

Thursday, October 19, 2017, Le Parquet Room – Jacques-Parizeau Building, Montreal

Honorary chair: Philippe Meunier, cofounder of Sid Lee Agency

Guest chef: Normand Laprise, Restaurant Toqué!

Guest sommelier: Véronique Rivest, world's 2nd best sommelier

For more information on this event, click here:

<http://www.institutta.com/soiree-benefice/soiree-benefice-2017/>

Prince Edward Island

This year approximately 1,000 new students commence studies at the University of Prince Edward Island. Part of their orientation is to raise funds for local charities, and we are one of the two charities chosen this year. An LD overview was given to the students. Finally the students will be visible throughout Charlottetown seeking donations for us to use in support of our Island community. The increased awareness is vitally important.

The winner of the LDAPEI and Staples Educator of the Year Award 2017 was Mark Ronahan, Vice Principal at Summerside Intermediate School. One student commented that they hate school but appreciated the time and effort of Mark in helping whenever and wherever possible. Mark received a \$1,000 gift voucher from Staples and a framed certificate.

All nominees were acknowledged and given framed certificates.

This Summer LDAPEI met with MLAs from all sides, including the Ministers of Rural and Regional Development and Family and Community Services. MLAs discussed the impact of learning disabilities on the lives of Islanders.

LDAPEI will be invited to discuss the Disability Support Program. This Provincial financial assistance excludes those with a LD as they are perceived as neither neurologically based nor lifelong!

Attending Job Fairs in Summerside and Charlottetown we reached out to adults who have realized that they may have a Learning Disability. Additionally, we provided booths at the Provincial Home and School and other events.



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We have just opened discussions with Corrections on PEI to discuss how we may support those with LDs who engage with the legal system in an attempt to reduce recidivism.

Yukon

Executive Function Training: Sarah Ward is returning to Whitehorse (LDAY, in partnership with Autism Yukon) to share her strategies for developing Executive Functioning Skills with children. We will host a full day workshop for teachers, support professionals and parents.

Mindfulness for Families: This series of five classes is for parents and children (~ 8 years and older) who want to learn more about what Mindfulness is and how the practice of Mindfulness Meditation can help both adults and children reduce anxiety and increase enjoyment and relaxation in our everyday lives. Parents work with one facilitator, while children work with a different facilitator on thematically similar topics, but in age specific formats. This will be our third time offering this program.

AURORA Workshops: Our series of workshops for the workplace has expanded. We now offer two full day and four 1.5 hour workshops for private businesses, government agencies and training organizations.

<http://www.auroraworkshops.com/>

Events, Conferences and Other News

International Conference on Learning Disabilities

October 19-20, 2017, Baltimore, Maryland

<https://www.council-for-learning-disabilities.org/2017-annual-conference>

International Dyslexia Association Conference

November 8-11, 2017, Atlanta, Georgia

<https://dyslexiaida.org/conference/>

Learning Disabilities Association of America 55th Annual Conference

February 21-24, 2018, Atlanta, Georgia

<https://ldaamerica.org/events/annual-conference/>

Our readers might enjoy this TED talk by Roxanne Reeves, the wife of a former provincial Premier. She discovered her learning disabilities as an adult, and then went on to finish a Ph.D. The main focus of the talk, however, is mentorship and not learning disabilities, but learning disabilities are part of it:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wpCZxiAQzw&feature=youtu.be>.