



A year in the life of the TLLT team



By **Danielle Fullan Kolton, PhD, The Manitoba Teachers' Society**

Passion, lifelong learning, experience, leadership, and creativity: What do these words have in common? They describe the work of 17 MTS Members who are the Teacher-Led Learning Team (TLLT). Less than a year ago, the TLLT was a mere concept on paper. Ten months later, we have four new workshops which have been facilitated in 19 schools across the province. This is messy work and collaborative learning at its finest.

The concept of TLLT is a pay-it-forward model rooted in reciprocal and networked learning. Team members - who are active teachers and principals

themselves - collaborate to design workshops that bring learners together in meaningful ways with practical content and interactive experiences. The workshops are half-day sessions, offered at school sites or divisional PD days for a booking fee of \$100.

Our workshop design respects the knowledge, skills, and experience that participants bring, and our aim is to *offer* new information about a topic and *invite* participants to connect with each other, the topic, and their learning goals. The Manitoba Teachers' Society has a long history of supporting teachers

talking to teachers as a valuable mode of professional learning; as leaders in learning, TLLT is no exception.

I have had the privilege of learning from this very talented and dedicated group as team leader of TLLT. Though I am proud of the workshops created by the team, I am, perhaps, more in awe of the process I have been witness to. Our training and design sessions fly by in a flurry of planning, discussion, field testing, feedback, and revisions. In the face of writers' block, design slumps, and information overload, the team digs deep and barrels forward. The level of professionalism is staggering,

and the earnestness with which they contribute is humbling.

To describe the work of TLLT without including some of the voices of the team would be void of the essence of this grassroots leadership:



Marla Armstrong,
Pembina Trails
Teachers' Association

I consider three things when undertaking ventures related to my work as an educator:

1. *Will I be challenged in a positive way?*
2. *Will I learn from the people I am working with?*
3. *Will I have an opportunity for growth in my thinking, my practice, or personally?*

I joined the TLLT to get better at developing and leading workshops. Yes, this has definitely happened. But more importantly, I have been challenged to find out about who I am as a learner. I have learned from the other members of TLLT and the MTS staff collaborating with us. I have grown in my thinking about what effective teams in schools can accomplish and how they benefit student outcomes. I have both changed and continue to reflect on how I interact with other educators as a learner. Personally, I am also gaining a sense of confidence about who I am as an educator, and I am embracing the part of me that will always be learning. Though I was previously frustrated by my feelings of never knowing enough and still needing to learn because it made me feel insecure, I can now shout it from the rooftops ... almost!



James Kostuchuk,
Portage la Prairie
Teachers' Association

It should come as no surprise that the most effective professional development in our careers often comes from the colleague down the hall. For many of us, this teacher-to-teacher contact time is severely limited, and the Teacher-Led Learning Team wants to reboot the conversation. As TLLT facilitators, we are the real deal: front line teachers, straight out of the trenches, facilitating meaningful conversations. I have always been wary of the banking concept of education; that is, the open-head-insert-

fact or sage-on-the-stage approach to professional development. Our work is about learning, growth, and risk taking in partnership with fellow Members aimed at improving practice.



Chantelle Cotton,
Winnipeg Teachers'
Association

Being on the TLLT team is like attending Winnipeg Folk Festival every year: I am excited in the days leading up to our seminars, and I have some prep to do in order to get ready. When I walk into the MTS building, I see old friends while making new connections as music plays to call us into action and settle us down into our mindful routines. Our training and design seminars usually end the way Folk Festival ends: I am tired and satiated, yet content and inspired. At Folk Festival, I walk away with a year's worth of new music to savour. When TLLT ends, I walk away with 20 sticky notes, a few videos, a new workshop to facilitate, and lots of new ideas to try out until we meet again to learn, play and work as educators across the province.



Laurie Bachewich,
Rolling River
Teachers' Association

TLLT is an opportunity for growth and learning. In its safe and supportive environment, TLLT offers the chance to learn from my colleagues, teach my colleagues, and most importantly make connections within the MTS organization and the province. TLLT has allowed me to be a better leader, to learn from other leaders in our profession, and to share that learning with others. There is no better professional development than that which allows us to learn from each other. TLLT offers that.

Are you interested in reading about our team members, booking a workshop and/or applying to the team? Please visit www.mbteach.org, and select Professional Development>TLLT. Feel free to contact Danielle Fullan Kolton at dfullankolton@mbteach.org for more information.

Danielle Fullan Kolton is a staff officer in the Professional and French Language Services Department (PFLS). The PFLS department is committed to supporting teachers as adult learners. Follow us on Twitter @mtslearning.



TLLT Workshops

Diversity & inclusion

The 4A's Inclusivity Lens: Is Everyone in Focus?

Participants will develop the capacity to work inclusively with diverse school communities.

Topics: inclusive practices that enhance access, agency, advocacy, and solidarity action; privilege and power.

Classroom practices

Classroom Management & Student Engagement

Participants will explore prevention and intervention strategies to enhance classroom management and student engagement.

Topics: relationships; role of the teacher; brain friendly teaching; conscious discipline skills; paradigms for responding to challenging behaviours; psychology of success.

Collaborative cultures

High-Impact Teams

Participants will learn about ways to enhance meaningful collaborative work within grade-level teams, PLCs, and departments.

Topics: qualities of high-performing groups, strengths and impacts of work style preferences; tools for talking about things that matter.

Student support

Cultivating the Super Powers in your Teams: Working with Educational Assistants

Participants will explore practices and strategies that enhance dynamic working relationships between teachers and EAs.

Topics: roles and responsibilities of Educational Assistants; MTS policy and provincial regulations; effective communication strategies; preparation, guidance, and supervision of EAs.