

Association of
**Workplace
Educators**
of Nova Scotia

Connecting...

Winter 2014

Metro Networking Event Kicks off New Year

Getting back into the swing of things after a holiday break can be tough – but not for AWENS. January's networking event in Halifax was lively, well attended, and inspiring.

AWENS has started the New Year off with a successful networking event in the Metro region. On January 16, 2014, 20 people gathered for a luncheon at the [Local Council of Women Halifax House](#), a beautiful historic home in the South End of Halifax. To read more on the history of this home, click [here](#).

The networking event, organized by Kathy Stanford, an AWENS member, had 20 members attend although only 16 were anticipated – an astonishing turn out rate! The event was an informal luncheon in which members could mingle with one another to get to know the other instructors within the region. The attendees included a variety of members: some who had been with AWENS for numerous years and others who have recently joined our community. Workplace Education Coordinator Margo Hampden gave an update of where Workplace Education programs are. Margan Dawson, Executive Director of AWENS, gave a brief presentation on what AWENS does and how we support our members. Members in the room were then invited to share a bit about themselves – their

name and current occupation, how long they have been a member of AWENS, and their best practices.

As the discussion travelled around the room, it became evident that the room was filled with talented, skilled and passionate people. Each member's story relayed a positive message. Not only do our members excel in their respective workplaces, but they absolutely love what they do in the delivery of Workplace Education programs. It was inspiring to see such a keen group of individuals sharing their knowledge. In sharing AWENS' best practice, Margan articulated that AWENS supports our members through regular communication, professional development, and a range of other resources.

"The networking event was a big happy love fest. The environment was warm and supportive," said AWENS member Cara Lynn Garvock. With the success of the event in the Metro area, we look forward to hosting events such as this in other regions of the province.

"The networking event was a big happy love fest!"
– Cara Lynn Garvock, AWENS Member

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The Power of Networking

When AWENS member Dana Perry let us know about a call for 12 trainers last November, we circulated it to our members. Three members were successful in their application: Wayne Sarty (AWENS Board Member, Cape Breton), Cleo Johnston (Central) and Lisette Jones (South Shore).

The call was issued by the [Community Sector Council of Nova Scotia](#) for training sessions on [Volunteer Screening](#).

In late November, our three successful members attended the train-the-trainer session in Halifax. The Volunteer Screening training will be offered in various sites throughout the province in the coming year. Congratulations to our members, and thank you to Dana for sharing the opportunity with us.

Introducing AWENS' Newest Committee

The Editorial Board

February 3, 2014, marked the official birth of the AWENS Editorial Board. The purpose of the Editorial Board is to bring recommendations forward to the Board of Directors. The Editorial Board was put in place to advise and support the newsletter author and the editor of any future AWENS publication, as well as to contribute to an integrated communication policy. The Editorial Board currently consists of four members: Rachel Cooper, Margan Dawson, Leigh Faulkner and Laura Park. Although it has not been around for long, the committee has already been hard at work in producing this current newsletter!

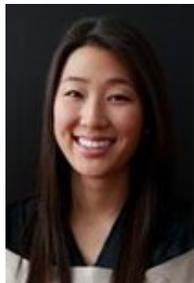
Get to know the Editorial Board



Rachel Cooper

Rachel is a [writer, editor and nature photographer](#). She has experience in writing newsletters and is an asset to this team – she has been a freelance editor and writer for numerous years. Rachel has the ability to take a room full of ideas bouncing around, process it, and turn it into a written plan. We were

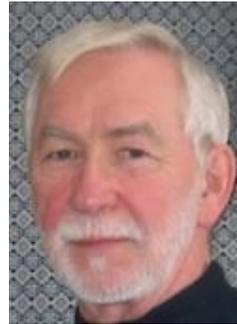
fortunate to see this in action during our first Editorial Board meeting. She sees the Editorial Board benefiting AWENS by publishing a quarterly newsletter that will interest and be useful to our members, among other projects. Rachel joined AWENS in 2011 when a friend recommended Workplace Education to extend her work, since Rachel was already giving seminars and workshops on writing. An interesting fact about Rachel: “I write short plays, mostly comedies. So far, two of them have been performed in Annapolis Royal as part of the annual King’s Shorts Festival of ten-minute plays.”



Laura Park

Laura is a recent graduate of Mount Allison University (BComm '13). This is her first experience writing a newsletter, but her sense of curiosity and desire to learn fuels her excitement in creating the newsletter. With a background in Marketing and Management, she is looking forward to bringing the

skills she has learned in the past to this committee. Laura sees the Editorial Board as a good link with the communications committee to ultimately benefit AWENS members. Laura hopes to continue her education in pursuing a Master in Business Administration degree from Dalhousie University.



Leigh Faulkner

Before becoming involved in workplace education, Leigh was a teacher and administrator in both public and private schools and in universities in three countries. He is a past associate editor of the poetry journal *Germination* and was an award winner for his poetry in the CBC Literary Competition (as it was then known). He has five poetry and study skills books in print and has ten books published electronically. Additionally, he has produced 16 short study skills videos and made them available on YouTube. For Leigh, two of the great pleasures of being involved in education – whether as a teacher, instructor or facilitator – have been the friends he has made and the satisfaction of following the accomplishments of those friends, whether they are in a workplace in Nova Scotia or elsewhere around the world.



Margan Dawson

Margan has been involved with Workplace Education since August of 1999, and has been with AWENS since before its incorporation in October of 1999. From her teaching experience, she brings knowledge around language and grammar to the Editorial Board. She has written an article on informal learning. The Editorial Board was created to respond to AWENS' communication needs, and she sees the Editorial Board as a resource, as it serves as a link to the communication strategy. Margan believes the Editorial Board is important for improving consistency and continuity as newsletter writers may change over time.

Christy Ann Conlin Wins Artist Award



"It was very meaningful to share this with the group. My work as a writer and a communicator really informs my workplace education background and it meant so much to have a dynamic group of people."

– Christy Ann Conlin

AWENS member [Christy Ann Conlin](#) has been recognized for her writing and artistic ability. Christy Ann, who is a writer, editor and broadcaster, is a recipient of the 2013 Established Artist Award through the Creative Nova Scotia Leadership Council. The award is given each year to five Nova Scotia artists in mid-career.

AWENS is proud of the multitude of talents and skills our members bring. Christy Ann expressed her gratitude to AWENS for the support she received: "It was very meaningful to share this with the group. My work as a writer and communicator really informs my work-

place education background and it meant so much to have a dynamic group of people."

Christy Ann's work is inspired by the people and everyday life in rural Nova Scotia. She finds the world around her full of exotica and mystery. Ideas for her stories begin as soon as she walks out of her front door and sees human beings engaged in the joys and sorrows of life. When asked what her favourite part of being a writer is, Christy Ann responded, "The actual process of writing is what I love the most, seeing the ideas come to life on the page."

A sample of Christy Ann's work can be found [here](#).

Aside from her writing, Christy Ann loves doing readings and working as a motivational speaker where she talks about how anyone can have a creative life.

In terms of Workplace Education and writing, Christy Ann stated that she finds many correlations between the two. "In both areas, it is about developing and improving, trying new approaches and techniques, [while] being open. There is a sense of adventure inherent to both!"

Congratulations Christy Ann on all of your hard work!

Two AWENS Members Receive Awards

[The Adult Education and Workplace Awards and Recognition Ceremony](#) took place a little later this year: November 15, 2013, as opposed to International Literacy Day, September 8, 2013. The Master of Ceremony, John Somers, opened the morning with a welcome address and the introduction of the [Honourable Kelly Regan](#), Minister of the Department of Labour and Advanced Education. Regan presented the first award, the [Council of the Federation Literacy Award](#). In presenting the award, Regan stated, "To achieve our goals, we need a community of support."

Two AWENS' members received awards on behalf of their companies. Tanya Burke, on behalf of the [East Hants Community Learning Association](#), received the *Family Literacy Achievement Award*. In receiving the award, Tanya expressed her gratitude and recognized it as a great accomplishment for East Hants Community Learning Association. However, this is no stopping point for the association: Tanya recognized that there are other areas to continually improve in order to achieve more successes. Matt Taylor, on behalf of the [Colchester Adult Learning Association \(CALA\)](#), received the *Seniors' Literacy and Learning Partnership Award*, presented by the Honourable Leo Glavine, Minister of Health and Wellness and Minister of Seniors. In presenting the award, Glavine stated that "we are among literacy leaders who are improving life for people in Nova Scotia in many respects."

While Tanya and Matt have been recognized at this awards ceremony for their efforts in Adult Education, both members are very involved with AWENS and workplace education. Tanya currently sits on the Board of Directors of AWENS, while Matt has delivered Essential Communication Skills for the Manufacturing Industry programs. Both members are strong examples of why we do what we do, and their successes only demonstrate the forward motion of improving Adult and Workplace Education.

Congratulations Tanya and Matt!



Matt (right) receiving his award from Hon. Kelly Regan (left)



Tanya (centre) receiving her award from Regan (left)

Get to Know Judy Purcell

Southwest Workplace Education Coordinator



Judy Purcell is rather experienced when it comes to Workplace Education – she has been involved in Workplace Education for 20 years now. Judy spent her first three years as an instructor, and for the past 17 years, she has been a Workplace Education Coordinator in Nova Scotia.

Through work, Judy travels a lot to different workplaces in the four counties that she works in: Lunenburg, Queens, Shelburne and Yarmouth. A day in the life of Judy varies day to day, and can range from being on the road spending time at workplaces, to attending committee meetings or spending the time in her office completing applications or working on curriculum projects.

When asked what she loves most about her job, she responded, “I enjoy all aspects of my job. I have a lot of variety, [am] always meet[ing] new people, and [am] faced with new challenges with each program.”

What drives Judy in her position is helping others, meeting new people, and being presented with opportunities to meet continuous challenges with new and innovative practices.

Prior to being a Workplace Education Coordinator, Judy’s involvement in Adult Education began in 1986 when she began teaching Adult Literacy (now Adult Education). She did this and taught English as a Second Language (ESL) for 12 years in Montreal. It was in Montreal that Judy began teaching adult literacy in the workplace, which was a new area at the time. She taught in a lock and die-cast factory. In 1996, Judy moved back to Nova Scotia and began her career as a Workplace Education Coordinator in 1997.

When Judy is not tied up with work, she loves to do activities with her two daughters, Eva (11) and Sonya (8), such as attending their school or sporting events. Judy also loves to read and to play golf in her spare time.

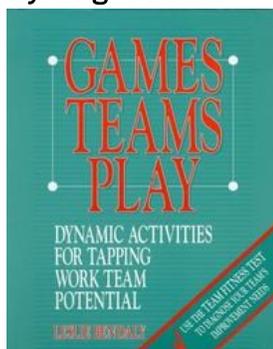
A facilitator who works closely with Judy, Rick McMullen, shared that working with Judy has been thoroughly enjoyable through their shared vision and mutual respect in their relationship. “Judy puts a lot of trust in me as an instructor, and I always know I have her support.”

“Judy puts a lot of trust in me as an instructor, and I always know I have her support”

*– Rick McMullen,
Workplace Education
Facilitator
(Southwest Region)*

Workplace Education Resource Review

By: Leigh Faulkner



ISBN: 0-07-552718-9

1 copy available in AWENS library.

Leslie Bendaly opens the book with the statement, "Facilitating the metamorphosis of work groups into teams is one of, if not the most important role in today's organization." Noting that the term "team" is often loosely used, she sets out to produce a plan that facilitators – whether they are workplace educators or in-house leaders – can use to develop and sustain effective teams.

In addition to the many participant-focused activities, Bendaly features and promotes a "Team Fitness Test," an assessment and development device for use with a team over time.

The activities are clearly laid out and can be used in a wide range of situations with groups of differing backgrounds and experience.

Follow-up book by the same author: [More Games Teams Play: Activities and Games for Powering Up Your Team's Potential](#)

Get to Know Rick McMullen

Southwest Workplace Education Facilitator

Rick joined AWENS in the spring of 2011 after teaching several workplace education programs and deciding that facilitating adult learning programs was not just a viable career option, but one he enjoyed. Based on the feedback he received from those initial programs, it seemed that he also had an instinct for it.

His roots in adult education go back to the late 1990s when he operated his own SCUBA instruction school in Kingston, Ontario, and spent close to 20 years volunteering his time to run a martial arts dojo. He currently holds a black belt in Kyokushin karate and lesser belts in multiple disciplines. His goal is to complete his martial arts training in Aikido.

With an education in business and commercial design, Rick has kept his feet firmly planted in the marketing and advertising world, and the technology around those activities. He has instructed programs in marketing, business management, sales, leadership, computers and software use. He is also trained in Six Sigma process improvement.

Rick served as a member of the AWENS computer lab policy committee establishing the rules, guidelines and best practices around the usage of the computer labs, and is currently the chair of the communications committee which is developing strategies for moving the AWENS website forward. For AWENS he wrote the Basic Computer curriculum and is currently adding the final touches to the Advanced Computer curriculum, which has components of mobile computing in the workplace.

Originally, Rick's passion for instructing came from seeing the transfer of knowledge to participants. Over the years this has shifted to the recognition of the depth of change that can occur in the individual in the room. "It's very humbling to see people refocus and reshape their lives from an in-class experience. It's a



"It is very humbling to see people refocus and reshape their lives from an in-class experience. It is a testament to the model of Workplace Education as delivered in Nova Scotia."

– Rick McMullen

testament to the model of Workplace Education as delivered in Nova Scotia. The best part of doing what I do is being part of a room full of strangers who become colleagues and friends, which is accomplished by them sharing their knowledge and expertise. A lot of the participants in a program are unaware of how much they know, or how effective they truly are until they get the feedback from the rest of the participants. There is real value in the shared experience."

Rick teaches across the South Shore and Annapolis Valley Regions and has had the opportunity to work closely with both Renette Muise, the Annapolis Valley Coordinator, and Judy Purcell, the South Shore Coordinator. "The respect these two have for their instructors is immense. Coordinators have to put a lot of trust in their instructors, and with these two, I always know I have their support. Just the knowledge of that is invaluable in the classroom," he says.

When not instructing, Rick spends his time enjoying Nova Scotia on two wheels by both motorcycle and bicycle. He is a self-confessed news junkie and has, generally, two or three books on the go at the same time.

Skills Training Inspires Wilson's Home Hardware

Wilson's Home Hardware Building Centre, located in Barrington Passage, is an 89-year-old business. The company is succeeding into its fourth generation of family ownership. The store began as a general store – primarily a grocery. In 1984, the grocery business was sold, and the company refocused its resources on core businesses. Wilson's Shopping Centre has 62 year-round employees, which climbs to over 70 during peak periods. The store consists of a Home Hardware and Building Centre, The Source, Petals and Lace Flower Shop, Home Furniture, Home Rentals and Home Garden Centre.

Instructor Rick McMullen has delivered "Essential Communication Skills for Sales" in order to address some of the organizational needs as determined by an Organizational Needs Assessment (ONA). The General Manager of Wilson's Home Hardware, Mike Wilson, says, "We first identified a need within our organization surrounding communication and salesmanship. We communicated with Rick what we were looking to deliver to our staff, and Rick laid out his thoughts and ideas of how he could deliver what we needed." After further conversations, the organization decided that what Rick could design and deliver to Wilson's Home Hardware could most definitely have an impact on the staff.

Wilson's Home Hardware is interested in skills training as they feel strongly about reinvesting in their staff and raising the level of satisfaction in both the personal and professional lives of staff members. "We feel the skills training that is being delivered to our group will benefit the quality of consumer experience we want to present to our clients, and as a result, our bottom line," said Wilson. Wilson also states that the organization wants their staff to feel happier at home and work, and that the organization strives to create a culture based around quality and pride.

Testimonials

"I believe the workplace training we are undertaking with our adult educator, Rick, has provided a platform in which we can explore a multitude of categories that our team has begun to critically analyse in ways they have never before. The experience has inspired conversations not typical to the retail landscape and enriched the relationships between both staff and management alike.

"I expect the applicable knowledge that will be brought onto our sales floor, which has been absorbed through the training classes, will benefit our staff and our results in both the short and long term future. It has helped form a common language that has already increased the flow of communication throughout the company and improved the dialogue at all levels."

– Mike Wilson, General Manager.

"This course is giving me the tools to better understand a customer's inquiries, so that I am better able to provide a response that they will understand. I did not realize before, that customers have differing ways of digesting information.

"This knowledge has the potential to raise the level of communication between our staff and our customers, which in turn could greatly improve the overall customer satisfaction experience that occurs, when visiting our store.

"A customer with a very positive experience when dealing with our store, will be a customer who is a repeat customer."

– Pat Lewis, Building Supplies Sales.

Save the Date!

Please join us for the AWENS Annual General Meeting!

When: Friday, May 30, 2014

Where: The Holiday Inn Halifax Harbourview (101 Wyse Road, Dartmouth, NS B3A 1L9)

Formal invitation and details to follow.

Measures of Success: Workplace Literacy & Essential Skills

Identifying Return on Investment (ROI) and Return on Expectations (ROE)

Submitted by Leigh Faulkner

You are a Workplace Educator, and a good one. You develop and facilitate excellent programs, but are there lasting benefits for your participants and the companies they work for? Well, sure there are. But how do you know? Have a look at some [proof](#).

Who?

The Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada). Project managed by the Centre for Literacy

Partners:

- The Centre for Literacy
- Essential Skills and Recognition for Prior Learning (RPL) – Industry Workforce Development Manitoba Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade (formerly Workplace Education Manitoba)
- Nova Scotia's Workplace Initiatives Program in the Department of Labour and Advanced Education (Judy Purcell, Steering Committee member).

Research and report by Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (Nova Scotia researcher: Emma Spencer, AWENS member).

What?

A research project to identify long-term benefits of workplace literacy and essential skills programs.

When?

September 2009 to March 2013

Where?

Workplace LES sites in Nova Scotia (8 sites) and Manitoba (10 sites). All 18 programs were regular Workplace Education programs set up and administered in the normal way.

Why?

"The overall goal was to develop and test an evaluation model to measure the long-term outcomes of workplace LES initiatives on individuals, workplaces, companies, and local community." (See: [Overview](#))

How?

"The outcomes were evaluated from the perspectives of learners, co-workers, supervisors, employers, and union representatives." (See: [Overview](#))

The Logic Model (see page 4–5 of the [Executive Summary](#)) gives a concise overview of the stages in the research process and the relationships among the various parts and how they contribute to determination of Return on Investment (ROI) and Return on Expectations (ROE).

Research Questions:

- 1) What are the long-term outcomes of workplace LES initiatives in Manitoba and Nova Scotia on the participants, workplaces and companies (longer-term is defined as six months after the start of training)?
- 2) What is a valid and reliable model for evaluating long-term outcomes of workplace LES initiatives? What are the appropriate measures?
- 3) What are effective and efficient ways to provide workplace LES initiatives to maximize positive long-term outcomes?

Findings

Statistically significant improvements in outcomes related to **human capital** included:

- **Increased confidence in work-relevant literacy skills**, such as technical and math skills trainees needed to do their main job well
- **Increased confidence in everyday literacy skills**, such as reading, writing, math, and computer use.
- **Increased practice of everyday literacy skills**, especially reading

There were also gains found in:

- **Improved social capital**, such as network size and composition
- **Enhanced cohesion**, such as increased trust
- **Increased well-being**, including satisfaction with life and work.

Also improvements in 11 **job performance indicators**:

- **Productivity gains**
- **Improvements in interpersonal relations**
- **Business reported training-related improvements**

And, significantly, **post-training gains** were seen among "groups often thought to benefit less from training":

- **Participants with lower levels of educational attainment**
- **Immigrants who commonly use languages other than English at home**
- **Older workers (age 45+)**

Want to read more?

- [Key documents](#)
- [Presentations and Webinars](#)
- [Final Report](#)

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AWENS Objective

The objective of the Association of Workplace Educators of Nova Scotia (AWENS) is to provide a forum for the promotion and advancement of excellence in instructional practices by networking, creating professional development activities, responding to trends in the field, and representing the interests of educators.

AWENS Mission

To promote excellence in the field of workplace education

AWENS Vision

A strong professional network of partners, supporting workplace education in Nova Scotia

AWENS Values**Collaboration**

We value collaboration with all sectors and regions of the province and with our partners at all levels.

Forward Thinking

We value forward thinking and maintain awareness of and are responsive to workplace trends with all our partners.

Support

We value the support of our membership by providing ongoing contact, networking opportunities, and updates.

Commitment

We will take on only those initiatives that fit with our goals, and we will incorporate our values into everything we do.

We would love to hear from YOU!

Send us your news, teaching tips, article ideas, or a moment of classroom inspiration – whether as an instructor or a participant. Deadline for the Summer 2014 issue is May 15, 2014. Write to awens@eastlink.ca