

## President's Message, Summer 2015

I savour this time of year. As I look forward to time at The Snug, our cottage on Georgian Bay, I find myself reflecting on another year of doing what I love to do – working with teachers, administrators and students to improve learning for all. This year, I also look back on CAfLN's growth from birth to infancy. It is a mere two years since Lorna, Ken and I launched The Canadian Assessment for Learning Network, but as we gathered in Nanaimo this past April, we saw the network's identity and personality emerging. During the April 10 Symposium, as members introduced themselves during the traditional First Nations greeting circle, there were educators from across the country almost equally representing Kindergarten to grade 12 and post-secondary institutions; there were researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers. And we all shared a common commitment: greater understanding and use of assessment that promotes learning for students, rather than simply measures it.

As a result of the creative and insightful input that we received from CAfLN members that day, our various committees, directed by a new, dynamic group of leaders, have been setting course to improve the effectiveness of our network. I would like to make special mention of the committee chairs who stepped up to the plate at the Annual General Meeting: Tandy Gunn, from SD 69 in British Columbia, is opening our eyes to a whole new range of opportunities in the area of *Communications*; Grant Page, from Seven Oaks SD in Manitoba, is working extremely hard on expanding our *Membership*; Veronica Sartesky, from the Midnight Sun SD in Alberta, is leading the way as we explore new avenues to *Fundraising and Sponsorship*; Paige Fisher of The University of Vancouver Island now chairs the vitally important *Resources/Research* committee; Denine LaBerge, from Division Scolaire Franco-Manitobaine, is learning the ropes as Secretary/Treasurer Elect; and Chris DeLuca is already busy working on our 2016 Annual Conference. The leadership already shown by these remarkable educators is what Lorna, Ken, and I envisioned only two years ago.

The growing excitement and influence of CAfLN was reflected in our Second Annual Conference the next day at The Coast Bastion Hotel, Nanaimo. If you haven't already done so, check out the rich examples of assessment for learning on the *Conference Highlights* page of the website (add link). Learn about writing conferences in kindergarten, innovative eLearning portfolios, and capturing digital evidence of mathematical understanding in the primary grades.

As CAfLN approaches its third year, we look forward to expanding our sphere of influence by highlighting Canadian research into assessment for learning; we will continue to improve our communication networks by increasing our presence on social media; and when we all meet at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario on May 13-14, 2016 for our Third Annual Conference and Symposium, we shall further establish CAfLN as an effective voice and influence in furthering the mission of assessment that improves learning for all children and students.

In the meantime, I've got a date with my kayak! I wish all of you a brief period of happy, safe and healthy relaxation during our all-too-brief summer.

Damian Cooper, President, The Canadian Assessment for Learning Network.