

Teacher wins national award

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by FRANK PEEBLES Citizen staff



Timma Blain

A local teacher has won a national award for outstanding work in the field of second language education.

Timma Blain, a curriculum and instruction development administrator for School District 57, was one of four people recognized by the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers with the 2007 H.H. Stern Award.

"(Blain) recognizes the challenge facing core French teachers who have little experience with French," said CASLT president Miles Turnbull. "In response, she created classroom resources connecting teachers' existing knowledge of balanced literacy with teaching French. Her ability to demystify second language instruction is essential to creating an effective and co-operative second language learning environment."

Blain said her approach involves taking a theme like a popular fable or music and using that as a basis for a series of French lessons. Over the last four years she has developed a number of modules, all aimed at the Grade 5 to 7 level, and each year she composes a couple more. Each of these lesson packages are available to any school in the district.

"I do it because I have a background in French language instruction and I feel our elementary teachers need support with that because they aren't specialists," Blain said.

"The whole thing is to get kids and teachers learning together. Everybody contributes: kids help other kids, teachers help other teachers to learn."

The CASLT award comes with a \$200 bursary to be applied to the work Blain is doing.