

A PORTRAIT OF UNION EDUCATION



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Legend has it that teachers make the worst pupils. But while it may not always be easy to satisfy their high expectations when they're sitting in the student seat, teachers, at least, need no convincing as to the value and importance of acquiring new knowledge... FNEEQ has an impressive track record when it comes to union education and, as this report shows, the last three years of training activities have been no exception.

Passion is often the driving force behind many a member's decision to get actively involved in trade unionism. Yet that flame can sometimes be dampened by the tangle of legal questions and complex nature of some of the other issues associated with union activism. It is for this reason that, from the very

beginning, the federation has focused on enlisting people with solid grassroots experience to provide training to our members. The challenge is to find practical and effective tools that take into account the widely diverse workplace reality of each of the three education sectors.

Every September, affiliated unions are sent a complete schedule of the training activities being offered both by the FNEEQ and by their central council. These two bodies split the subject matter according to their respective mandates. The central councils tend to offer training sessions on such topics as the workings of executive committees, labour union information, and occupational health and safety, whereas the federation generally centres its workshops on issues more closely related to the day-to-day realities faced by our members: contract negotiations for the private and university sectors, resource management in the CEGEPs, group insurance for our affiliated unions, and so on.

The two tables on the right present an overview of the training sessions offered by the federation, and their levels of participation, between fall 2010 and spring 2013.

Table 1 > General statistics

Year	Training sessions	Participants
2010-2011	8	230
2011-2012	5	105
2012-2013	11	247
TOTAL	24	582

Table 2 > List of training sessions

Training sessions	Group	Participants
Grievance officer 1	ALL	78
Grievance officer 2	ALL	94
Allocation and funding	CEGEP	88
Allocation and teaching load	CEGEP	94
Insurance	ALL	64
Financial statements	Private and university	29
New executive committee members	CEGEP	45
Negotiation	Private and university	26
Government and Public Employees Retirement Plan (RREGOP)	ALL	64
TOTAL		582

The first thing to note is the high level of participation: nearly 600 members in total came out to attend the 24 workshops held in either Québec City or Montréal during the three-year period.

But it is equally significant to look at the composition of the participation: not only were all three sectors represented, but a full 80 of the FNEEQ's 91 affiliated unions sent at least one person for training during the period in question.

These results send a positive message to the federation: its member unions believe in the importance of skills development and take advantage of the training opportunities available to them to do so.

Tables 3 and 4 provide further details on the profile of participants.

Table 3 > Sex of participants

	Number (%)
Women	158 (40%)
Men	244 (60%)
TOTAL	392

Table 4 > Frequency of participation

Number of training sessions	Number (%)
1 session	235 (60%)
2 sessions	78 (20%)
3 sessions	36 (9%)
4 sessions	24 (6%)
5 sessions	11 (3%)
6 sessions	3 (1%)
7 sessions	5 (1%)
TOTAL	392



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It is interesting to note that the proportion of men and women who took part in training is identical to that found in the FNEEQ's executive committees.

Moreover, of the 582 people in total who attended a workshop, a good percentage of them, or 40%, repeated the experience. While only a minority (20%) participated at least once a year, we salute the five members who zealously pushed the envelope by taking seven training sessions in the three-year period!

All of these results served as food for thought for a working committee struck last spring to come up with recommendations for maintaining and improving the training offer. The committee proposed the following concrete measures to the FNEEQ team meeting in June:

- 1) production of an annual report on training;
- 2) presence of two instructors at each training session;
- 3) preparation of a training appreciation survey;
- 4) audit of occupational health and safety options.

It should also be mentioned that new workshops are being added to the training schedule: "New executive committee members" for the private sector in fall 2013, "Negotiation" for the CEGEP sector in winter 2014, and training sessions by the Women's Committee, International Action Committee and Contingent Work Committee for all sectors by spring 2015.



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Union education at FNEEQ belies the old proverb that the shoemaker's children always go barefoot. In fact, quite to the contrary, the federation's track record in this regard attests to the tremendous vitality of our teaching environment and to the determination of member unions to make the most of every resource at their disposal.



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