

Keeping students connected

Queen Mary School teacher Todd Thorne honoured for tuning students in to the world of technology

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Queen Mary School teacher Todd Thorne was one of two Niagara teachers recognized this month for their commitment to teaching technology skills to their students.

"I was surprised when I got the news," Thorne said Wednesday. "I knew I was nominated because I was nominated by a teacher I work with, but I was still taken aback."

The Ontario Council for Technology Education, which represents technology teachers across the province, gave out its elementary and secondary school awards two weeks ago.

The annual award is given to teachers who display "an outstanding commitment to teaching science and technology as an integrated component of the curriculum," the council's website says.

The secondary school award was given to Gary Young of Welland's Eastdale Secondary School.

Thorne, who teaches his Queen Mary classes from a lab at St. Catharines Collegiate, said because students are being forced to make important choices at a younger age, everything from which

high school to attend to what kind of career they want, exposing them to technology is critical.

"They need that exposure so they can make the best choices," said Thorne, who has been teaching technology classes for the majority of his 14-year career.

Thorne's classes include everything from making ping-pong ball launchers to three-dimensional house designs.

Young and Thorne "demonstrate the qualities, skills and knowledge most valued in today's educators," said Kevin Graham, technology consultant for the District School Board of Niagara.

"Their skills have an impact not only on their students, but on technological education at their schools and at the board level."

Young, who has been at Eastdale since 1988, said technology training is important for students who might be headed into the trades.

"The reality now is going into one of these shops is like walking into a hospital, in terms of equipment and appearance," he said.

Clean working conditions, good pay with benefits and an emphasis on professionalism all serve to make the trades viable career options, Young said, and have helped change the public perception of jobs in these areas.



Todd Thorne is shown in the wood shop at St. Catharines Collegiate Wednesday, with his Grade 8 students hard at work in the background. Thorne was recognized this month by the Ontario Council for Technology Education for his commitment to teaching technology skills to his students.

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