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Richard K. Taylor
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Teachers can change careers
at any age, seminar told

More than 30 teachers attending a career planning workshop at Wilfrid Laurier University were told that teachers can successfully make a career change despite their years in age or in teaching.

Neil Gibson, mature student advisor at Laurier, says many teachers, frustrated in the classroom for one reason or another, wonder whether they can make a change and if this is the time to do it.

Gibson, a former teacher himself, says the answer is "yes," if a little common sense and planning are used. He feels strongly that no one should spend their life in a career that brings no rewards, feelings of accomplishment or pleasure.

"The anxiety of change is one thing you have to overcome," he told the teachers, some grizzled veterans and others newer to the profession. But with decreasing number of students many teachers seem willing to at least consider a switch.

Statistics from the United States showed that 110,000 teachers left their careers voluntarily last year. And Gibson said the number of teachers turning up at the Laurier placement and career services office has increased markedly in recent months.

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He said a person beginning the search for a new job should make a careful self-assessment, determining why they want a change and what kind of career they might find more satisfactory. And he warned that a change could mean a drop in salary since teachers are relatively well paid.

Then, the Laurier career advisor suggested, the teacher should look for a job in a positive way, not as job-seekers, but as talented persons with a lot to bring to their newly selected field.