Dear readers,

Recent education program initiatives and curriculum (e.g. Character Development Initiative; School Effectiveness Framework; Equity & Inclusive Education Strategy; Social Studies & Science Curriculum) in Ontario call for school boards, principals and teachers to draw on emerging “evidence-based” knowledge to ensure every child and youth in Ontario schools see themselves as included, successful, as having a sense of place and an understanding of global citizenship and environmental stewardship. For the past 10 years, Developing a Global Perspective for Educators (DGPE) at the University of Ottawa together with its school board and NGO partners, has taken a leadership role in ensuring classroom teachers are supported to acquire “evidence-based” practices for developing a global citizenship perspective that addresses teaching and learning, student engagement and equity priorities in relation to issues of human rights, environmental sustainability, peace and social justice, and international cooperative development.
This newsletter provides an overview of our existing partnerships and activities with Ottawa Carleton District School Board (OCDSB), the Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB), NGOs and the Centre for Global and Community Service (University of Ottawa) to extend and mobilize evidence-based research, curriculum design and assessment, critical pedagogy and resource development that continues to support teachers to meet curricular goals in elementary and middle school classrooms. During this year’s project, our research illustrated how developing a global citizenship perspective makes a significant difference in the formation of teacher candidates’ overall competencies in terms of engaging and preparing Ontario children and youth for the humanitarian expectations of the 21st Century. Through the creation of professional learning community teams of lead teachers, researchers and teacher candidates, we worked collaboratively with the OCDSB and the OCSB to mobilize knowledge that focused on the Ministry of Education’s key priority areas into experienced teachers’ classrooms and existing board programs while integrating different DGPE themes.

As part of this collaborative social action project we provided the following for the teacher and teacher candidates who participated:

1. Created a steering committee comprised of core DGPE faculty members and members of participating school boards, NGOs and teacher-candidates to oversee the design, implementation and evaluation of the project;
2. Established collaborative professional learning community teams comprised of educational researchers, lead teachers and teacher candidates enrolled in the 2011-2012 DGPE cohorts;
3. Facilitated two 2-day conferences and four 1-day workshops for both the participating lead teachers and teacher candidates;
4. Worked with the professional learning community teams to develop classroom-ready teaching materials and web-based resources that are aligned with the Ontario curriculum expectations and address goals of current school board programs (e.g. Character Development Initiative, 2008; School Effectiveness Framework, 2010; Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009; Shaping our Schools, Shaping our Future, environmental education policy framework);
5. Drew upon “best practices” and Ministry policy guidelines for the 21st century (backward design, assessment for, of and as learning, differentiated instruction, inclusive education and integration of 2.0 technologies to teach global education); and
6. Evaluated the overall project in terms of its impacts of mobilizing knowledge, enhancing teacher confidence and practice and as collaborative partnership with local school boards and NGOs.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank KNAER for supporting this innovative knowledge mobilization project as well as our partners. This project would not have been possible without all of their collaborative efforts.

Sincerely Nicholas Ng-A-Fook,
Engaging Youth as Global Citizens: Activate Learning

DGPE Fall Institute: Lamoureux Hall, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa, September 30 - October 1 2011
By Joanne M.C. Lalonde

This really exceeds all my expectations but it is what I was hoping for. I can take this (holding a USC Seed Map) into the classroom on Monday and probably start using it right away...

(Comment from a Teacher Candidate from the On-Site Teacher Education Program of the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa, after participating in USC Canada’s “Playing with Food” workshop)

Resources:
www.developingaglobalperspective.ca

Upcoming Event:
Our next DGPE Fall Institute will take place on September 21 & 22, 2012 at the Faculty of Education.

For more information on how to register visit our DGPE website.

The Fall Institute of the Developing a Global Perspective for Educators Program (DGPE) was this academic year’s first mobilization and dissemination opportunity specifically aimed at supporting the integration of global themes into Ontario’s K-12 curriculum. The 2011-2012 Institute, entitled “Engaging Youth as Global Citizens: Activate Learning” attracted close to 250 participants, including pre-service and practicing teachers, faculty members, graduate students, community partners from non-profit groups and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The 2011 Fall Institute
Friday evening’s plenary session of the Fall Institute welcomed participants with four presentations by Dr. Joel Westheimer, Dr. Richard MacIvor, Dr. Lorna McLean and Lisa Glithero - a meta-perspective on the theme of engaging youth as global citizens. The presentation topics ranged from theories of global citizenship to the participation of youth in discussing children’s rights in the developing world. We explored some of the obstacles facing us when we work in the areas of peace and global development education and we concluded with an inspiring example of what education for environmental sustainability can look like with Lisa Glithero’s “Students on Ice Expedition” presentation.
The participants then attended a film festival featuring five documentaries about global awareness, social activism and youth engagement. After the showings, graduate students facilitated discussions of the films. On Saturday, participants followed their personalized schedules and attended the five interactive workshops from a selection of over 30 different workshops that were available.

The Institute provided a unique opportunity to mobilize knowledge about how teachers might integrate global education themes such as international cooperative development, peace education, environmental sustainability, democracy, human rights, gender equality, social justice, anti-racist education, inclusivity, food security, and HIV/AIDS into their classrooms. The various workshops aided teacher candidates by providing different practical strategies for curriculum design, pedagogy and assessment skills by offering, alongside NGO and community partners, more than 30 bilingual hands-on workshops on a wide variety of global citizenship topics. The workshops were a rich source of classroom-ready information and provided important opportunities for experts who continue to develop accessible teaching materials and web-based resources to support pedagogical practices focusing on how teachers can integrate a global perspective into their curriculum designs.

“I got the answers I hoped for!”

The real story of the institute’s success is encapsulated by the enthusiasm and engagement of the young teacher quoted at the beginning of this newsletter. As a participant-observer of both Friday evening’s keynote addresses and the Saturday workshops, I informally interviewed many participants about their experiences, and responses were overwhelmingly positive. A post-Institute self-administered electronic program evaluation survey (with 134 respondents) supported these immediate impressions. 96.3% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the institute provided them with new knowledge and that it was useful to them as educators. Furthermore, 89.9% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the institute provided them with an opportunity to explore the ways that global education can be integrated into the classroom. Additionally, 91.7% either agreed or strongly agreed that the workshops provided content and teaching strategies that might enhance student engagement and 79.6% either agreed or strongly agreed that the keynote speakers helped to further develop their understanding of global education.

The Experience

For the participants with whom I spoke, and for me personally, the institute was a seamless and integrated whole, beginning with the dedication to environmental sustainability, ability to design one’s own program, and the welcoming ‘ice breaker’ activity of Global Bingo. The keynote presentations and the documentary film festival set the stage for Saturday’s hands-on workshops. The five workshops in which I participated varied in format from an informative lecture on the necessity of critical thinking when integrating human rights in a Canadian context, to a presentation focused on food security that included a variety of classroom materials suitable to K-12 classrooms. Many take-home resources were available. One workshop combined a brief lecture with a game that engaged participants in the untenable choices refugees must make when they are forced to flee their homes. The final workshop I attended explored a single inspirational project that focused on the education of girls and micro financing for women in Tanzania. The two teachers who participate in the programs of Project TEMBO shared their on-the-ground experiences. The workshops enhanced my understanding of human rights from a legal perspective, broadened my knowledge of food security issues, and opened my eyes to the lived realities of refugees. I was able to critically re-appraise the concept of the refugee subject as “victim.”
The Workshop Leaders
The workshop leaders were knowledgeable about the K-12 Ontario curriculum, offering a wide variety of resources, some in the form of ‘take away’ materials. Some presenters offered to give talks or workshops at schools or to be available as resource persons. Most NGO presenters encouraged us to visit their updated educational websites for grade-appropriate activities that support the incorporation of issues of global citizenship into the classroom. All of the presenters gave out their business card and/or their email address, encouraging us to follow up with them personally if we had further questions or wanted suggestions for other resources. It is the enthusiastic and knowledgeable presenters that truly make this institute ‘work’ according to the participants I interviewed. As was noted by several students, many of the workshop leaders have been, or continue to be in-classroom teachers.

The Fall Institute brings together global education theory based on the latest research with pedagogical praxis that draws upon the experience of a wide variety of educators. While our survey indicated that the vast majority of respondents (96.2%) felt that their thinking about global citizenship education was changed by attending the Institute, I will leave you with a teacher candidate’s comment that sums up the impact of the 2011-2012 DGPE Fall Institute:

Engaging Youth as Global Citizens: Activate Learning.
“Overall, I had a GREAT day and received LOTS of information which will be helpful in the future. I would have taken more workshops if possible! There were so many choices...”

(The Program for the 2011 Fall Institute is available on the DGPE website)
To begin the initial conversation about environmental sustainability in the Professional Learning Communities (PLC), teachers and teacher candidates were asked to respond using a “placemat” consisting of five quadrants to capture thoughts, ideas, and inspirations. Participants were asked to respond to the questions “What does environmental sustainability mean to you?” and “What do you see as current best practices in engaging students in environmental learning?” What emerged were a collection of resources, memorable quotations, best practices, names of environmental leaders and philosophers, and a lexicon of learning, sustainability, and stewardship.

Having had the opportunity to read and digitize the responses to share with participants, I found the content of these “placemats” crossed the sciences, the arts, the social sciences, world history, and mathematics. Eleven placemats emerged portraying the graphic recordings of doodling, drawing, and informally writing at the intersection of theory and practice. The open-endedness of the responses to the questions clearly demonstrated the profound conversation occurring at the Confederation Education Centre.

A recurring theme included teaching students to appreciate and value nature, learning about global environmental challenges, and considering ways to make a difference. By giving students a variety of opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom, participants wrote about students using critical thinking to understand why they are being asked to participate in environmental sustainability activities like example, planting a community garden, recycling, cleaning the Capital, making windmills, and walking.

One group wrote “Environmental Stability means preserving the Earth for future generations...To keep the earth healthy by reducing our carbon footprint to ensure a healthy environment...making real life connections that sends a message to kids of all ages that they can appreciate the gravity of the situation. Experiments.” Another group’s notes included, “not using more than our share of resources...leaving enough for others in present and future.” While focusing on authentic experiences, another placemat clearly stated “environmental sustainability: understanding that the resources that we have are not unlimited and recognizing that our use of those resources today will impact...future use.”

The definition of environmental sustainability in Gro Harlem Brundtland’s (1987) report, Our Common Future as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” resonated in this workshop. As the former Prime Minister of Norway, Brundtland discussed the interdependence of the environment and how ecological sustainability includes more than “environmental issues.” At the time, she emphasizes that the environment exists in connection with human actions. While probably considered revolutionary at the time, many participants wrote about the renewed relevance of engaging students in holistic learning activities that address the complex and interconnectedness of environmental issues. Additionally, many talked about bringing students outside of a traditional classroom experience in an effort to break the mold through hands-on, project-based, student-led initiatives. Not only is the relationship between students and the environment important, but the relationship amongst students also contributes to the connections needed to engage in sustainable practices.
In addition to the ideas offered through the “placemats,” participants also had an opportunity to write on post-it notes their ideas/thoughts and place them on a wall in the room throughout the workshop. Several provocative questions emerged from this exercise. Can the economy be sustainable? What do you do about students from a low socioeconomic status who need litter-free lunches but their parents cannot afford plastic containers for storing food so packaged products are the only accessible items? What are we doing to accommodate varying ability levels so environmental action is relevant and easy for all?


One of the final activities, before teachers and teacher candidates met in their PLCs to participate in the process of developing a big idea and an essential question to frame student learning using poetry. Based on images taken at different distances, participants were shown an image and asked to write one word, shown another image and asked to write two words, and shown a third image and asked to write three words to compose a poem. While not readily apparent when viewing the images for the poem, participants viewed images depicting two million plastic bottles, 426,000 cell phones discarded, and 60,000 plastic bags discarded. The impact of this activity prompted everybody to think about differentiated instructional strategies, assessment, and big ideas.

Nature Rules!
Save the planet!
We are all connected...

By Katrina Isacsson
“Brief overview of that initial conversation with OCSB”

“All it takes is one hand to say hello..... Hopefully, you will use that to spread a little peace.” With this opening statement, the initial conversation began about global citizenship and building communities of inquiry on 8 December 2011 at the Professional Learning Workshop with the Ottawa Catholic School Board.

The day continued with some inspiring comments from Brenda Wilson. She encouraged teachers and teacher candidates to “let the inquiry come from the students.” Through a description of the Collaborative Inquiry Action Cycle, participants were provided an opportunity to practice this process of Plan, Act, Observe, and Reflect. In groups, participants thought about the following questions: What was your plan today? What are your actions? What have you observed so far? What are you wondering about today? Finally, participants were asked to complete the sentence, “When you leave here today,.....”

In addition to workshops on poverty, hunger, child labour, and education, participants engaged in an activity to think about global perspectives that could be an impetus at one’s school. Initially, participants were asked to write one or two words on a card about the most important issue they felt faces the world today. Next, participants were asked to silently walk around the room sharing their card in order to pair up with individuals who had similar interests. As the groups grew larger, participants looked for the commonalities amongst their interests and named their group. The following groups emerged:

- Group about Hunger
- Group about Injustice
- Group about Children’s rights and education
- Group about Children’s cultural acceptance and peace
- Group about 99% and 1%
- Group about equity and equity within education
- Group about Poverty

Making connections amongst these groups using black string stretched from cluster to cluster helped bring the cause and effect of important global issues into the workshop. Poverty has an impact on human rights, inequality relates to food, and inequity has an impact on education because students can’t go to school due to malnourishment.

The rest of the day focused on using the wealth of resources provided to brainstorm ideas for classroom inquiries. Teachers and teacher candidates looked at strategies to link curricular expectations to social justice inquiries.
The resources included Where Great Teaching Begins: Planning for Student Thinking and Learning. The book is described as explaining how to shift from “planning for activities” to “planning for outcomes.” The objective is to focus on Student- and Learning-Centered Instructional Design. This includes:

- Focus on what kinds of thinking students do
- Focus on intellectual skills students develop
- Focus on what students take away from the classroom events and experiences
- Burning question: “What will students be learning today?”
- Planning addresses long-term outcomes


Hannah Beach has written various books. A book targeted to students is called I Can Dance A Better World. She uses dance and drama to explore issues of social justice. Once participant indicated: “She has personal ways of approaching this subject. There are different ways of using dance.” Some great excerpts of the book and from the DVD can be found at http://hannahbeach.com/i-can-dance-a-better-world.ca
A truly democratic nation fosters and promotes habits of democratic participation in its education system, but Canada and the United States are struggling to do just that, according to research by University of Ottawa professor and Democratic Dialogue founder Dr. Joel Westheimer.

Speaking to an audience of teacher candidates and Ottawa Catholic School Board teachers as part of the KNAER initiative, Westheimer underscored the importance of helping students realize their potential as citizens to critically analyze social programs and government policies. “And yet so few of our school programs are doing that,” he pointed out, despite their own systemic initiatives that intend to promote the tenets of democratic citizenship.

Instead, Westheimer says, the majority of school programs are creating “personally responsible citizens”. These are the individuals who are often educated to have good character and pure intentions, but only take democratic action on a narrow and individual level. Two other classes of citizen found in Westheimer’s research differ from this group of individuals.

Less common than personally responsible citizens are “participatory citizens,” who are characterized less by their individual efforts, and more by their tendency to organize and collaborate on a larger scale for social justice initiatives. Participatory citizens, for example, may organize a community food drive to which a personally responsible citizen may contribute a non-perishable item.

Rarest of all, however, is the individual who can play the biggest role in tackling social issues. The “social justice-oriented citizen” is one who questions the very existence of problems in society, and further asks how the root causes of these problems may be addressed. Referring back to the food drive example above, this brand of citizen would consider the issue on a higher level, asking how people are going hungry in one of the world’s wealthiest nations.

Although many education programs have become more aware of the value and need for social justice-oriented citizens in a healthy society, research suggests that this has not translated into better pedagogical practices in the area of citizenship. In trying to determine why this is, Westheimer points to standardized testing and career-oriented training, noting that “the current social climate surrounding education puts tremendous pressures on schools to pay attention the individual and ignore the kind of collective work that [we are] talking about today.”
“It’s fantastic that you’re here today for these conversations on global citizenship, because it’s an attempt to shift the way we think about what schools are for, and what the purpose of school is. It’s not just a job training institution; it was never that, historically. It’s not just about teaching kids basic skills. It’s about teaching kids what their place is in the world, and how they can make meaning out of the information that they’re learning.”

Joel Westheimer is a professor with the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa. For more information on his research activities, visit http://www.democraticdialogue.com.
“Adventures abound for micro-financeur and Ottawa middle-school teacher”

Bonnie Burlton had a problem. She was teaching at a school in Cameroon as part of an internship with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and at the same time seeing first-hand the social problems that befell the community she lived in. “Auntie Bonnie,” the students would say as they came to class in the morning, “I’m hungry.”

Burlton had already embraced, and been embraced, by the community in which she was teaching. Out of a sense of responsibility and care for students’ well-being, and having a little extra cash in her pocket, she helped to provide morning breakfasts for her class before they began the school day. Her internship, however, was a temporary one. “I’m not going to be here for the rest of my life, and I don’t have enough money to do this for the rest of my life,” she remembers aloud for her audience of teacher candidates and Ottawa-Carleton District School Board teachers. Realizing this, she sought to find a sustainable solution to the problem.

On the request of one of the mothers of the schoolchildren, Bonnie loaned $80 CAD for the purchase of a sewing machine, so she could make money by creating and selling dresses. When this mother had earned back the $80, it was paid forward to another mother with a different business venture—and the process repeated itself, again and again, until it became clear that a sustainable solution to the community’s poverty had arrived. The money for the sewing machine turned out to be the first loan in what has now become a $150 000 micro-financing initiative called Drombaya, founded by Burlton and associate Sebastian Schmidt, which distributes loans to women groups living in extreme poverty.

Inspired by her first teaching experience, Burlton enrolled in the University of Ottawa’s teacher education program. She quickly found herself in a middle school classroom in Ottawa, keeping an eye out for opportunities to engage her students in issues of equity, as well as the social issues presented to her by NGOs throughout her Bachelor of Education.
She enrolled her class in a local “Entrepreneurial Adventure” program, in which classrooms take on a charity-driven business venture with the mentorship of a businessperson in their community. The students just needed an idea for a business venture. Brainstorming ideas was difficult for the class, however, and they found themselves stuck at the first step for a couple weeks. “The hardest part was just letting them go, but it was also the most rewarding part,” said Burlton.

In an incidence of good timing, students remarked on their teacher’s name-brand yoga pants, telling her that they were “cool.” Taking advantage of the moment, Burlton asked why they thought so, opening a dialogue that, when paired with the viewing of a pair of related films on brand-name sweatshops and environmental impacts of consumerism, prompted the students to hold a Thrift Store Fashion Show. The goal of this venture was to raise awareness of the issues surrounding social branding, and to promote sustainable and responsible consumer fashion.

The class built a website, wrote letters, made phone calls, and even auditioned models. They dedicated departments for publicity, design, and finance. “Everyone had a job, everyone was doing something,” said Burlton. The eventual fashion show was a resounding success, and the work that it involved touched on all aspects of curriculum: writing, data management, media literacy, number sense, oral communication, and more.

Reflecting on the project, Burlton had the following message for her audience: “Be passionate! Plan what makes you and your students excited. Your passion and knowledge is contagious. With a little adjustment you can fit a lot of the curriculum in. Don’t be afraid to let them take over and make mistakes. They will learn from the mistakes.”

For more information on Bonnie Burlton’s micro-financing project ‘Drombaya,’ visit http://www.drombaya.org.
As part of the “Mobilizing a Global Perspective with Educators” initiative, a 4-part seminar series was organized for teacher candidates at the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa. The series was developed and facilitated by Lisa Glithero, a doctoral student and Developing a Global Perspective for Educators (DGPE) research assistant.

Through a highly participatory, dialogue-based format, the aim of the seminar series was to explore challenging questions on educational change around issues of environmental sustainability. In bridging current research in the fields of environmental education and civic education, seminar participants were encouraged to examine the tensions and gaps between education research, teacher education and classroom pedagogy and practice. A further aim of the series was to highlight innovative resources, existing school projects and models that are inspiring meaningful change towards sustainability.

Education for a Sustainable Future

Education for Sustainable Development, Education for Sustainability, Sustainable Education... what do all of these titles mean? How do they differ? How do they relate to environmental education, ecological literacy and ‘eco-justice’ pedagogy, as well as Global Education more generally? What is effective pedagogy around sustainability?

These essential questions will frame an interactive seminar where participants will explore the history of environmental education, broader sustainability discourse and the recent Ontario Ministry of Education (2007) report— Shaping our Schools, Shaping our Future— and (2009) policy framework—Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow— which collectively focus on the various ways environmental education (and sustainability) could be narrated across the school curriculum.

Students and Educators as Activists—exploring social justice oriented learning, community-based action projects, and service learning

How do we as educators create learning opportunities with our students to enact positive social change? How can new teachers mobilize youth toward social justice? Through a conversation-style format, seminar participants will explore the idea, roles and tensions of students and educators as ‘activists,’ as well as examine pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning that (might) engender agency in youth—the idea that we as teachers and students can go beyond deconstructing texts and
systems to include participating in the 're-authoring' of new and more just, sustainable narratives.

Exploring Democratic Spaces, Places and Perspectives in Education

How can we as educators mobilize youth toward peace and democratic engagement? This participatory seminar will examine the above question through the lens of a recent CBC Podcast of Ursula Franklin (May 2010) speaking on Peace, Democracy and her notion of "scrupling"— the need for public to come together in dialogue to address/understand/ transform the institutional/structural impediments to democratic process and overall public engagement. Participants will explore the deficit, as indicated in educational research, of youth's lack of knowledge on democratic process as well as discuss ways in which youth can and are (peacefully) engaging in social change movements.

"Earth to Table": Development and the Local Food Movement

How can we as educators make connections to the Ontario curriculum in terms of addressing environmental sustainability, social justice, and human rights through a local food movement curriculum? As public awareness grows around the socio-cultural, ecological and economic implications of global, transnational food corporations, we are witnessing a social movement here in Canada and abroad around a revitalization of small-scale, sustainable food production -- a movement that educational research suggests is highly relevant in the education of today’s youth. This seminar will explore what is currently happening in schools with regards to local food movements including the Edible Schoolyard Project. Resources and strategies as to how to design curriculum and initiative school and community-based food projects as new teachers will be shared.

Here’s a sample of what students had to say of their respective seminar series experience:

“I always looked forward to Lisa’s noon hour Seminar Series on environmental sustainability—the topics were of deep interest to me and she has a way of presenting issues that is thought-provoking and very participatory, I didn’t want to miss one. Lisa engages her listeners through her sensitive story-telling and enthusiasm for what she believes in; her passion for experiential learning outdoors. She always provided lists of fascinating and highly useful resources for us, and was always keen to hear what we had learned and experienced in life to contribute to the general discussion. I am really grateful to have had the opportunity to attend this series and to get to know Lisa and the amazing work that she has done and person she is. I know she has inspired many of us and I hope she continues holding this Seminar Series in the future.”

Jacquie Heim, B.Ed.2011-2012
Do you view Equity as a primary focus of your teaching approach?

Providing a culture of “equity of access” ensures learning and the achievement of learning goals are accessible to all students. Through a guided tour of Equity in education, Sharan Samagh and Tracy Snarr provided both historical and contemporary views and resources on Equity of Access in their workshop entitled Equity and Exceptionalities: Lesson modifications to ensure the learning (thinking/content/context) process and the product (learning goal) is accessible for all learners.

The message provided throughout the discussion and dialogue emphasized “We need to understand how to get students to a place where they understand.” In addition to providing case studies of three students, a clear mission statement was presented on Equity of Access:

We must ensure all students are able to access all aspects of the teaching and learning taking place, so they can confidently demonstrate their understanding of the concepts and skills being taught and evaluated.

By beginning with a class profile at the beginning of the school year, we can map out the types of learners we have so we can provide a needs-based approach that places students first and curriculum second.

Many examples relating to English Language Learners were provided which can also be used with all students to ensure a community exists within the classroom. One example provided related to scribing for students on a rotating basis. While this technique may be beneficial for students who are learning English and can verbalize a response to an activity, it can also be used for native speakers of English to assist with their articulation of ideas. Flexible grouping can also aid in facilitating an inclusion model.

Case studies provided insight to types of considerations when teachers and teacher candidates are in the process of developing big ideas and essential questions in their professional learning groups. At times there may be students that are not reading at grade level. While this may not be a consideration if one is not assessing reading, it can impact the activities related to planning, classroom management, oral language, and media literacy. Outlining two of the case studies helps us to understand the role of equity.

Case Study 1 - The student has been in Canada for two years. He studied some English in his country of origin, although most of the instruction focused on rote learning and independent reading with limited opportunities for oral communication. The student works hard to read for meaning but is often frustrated as his English vocabulary is limited. He decodes well but does not work well with a bilingual dictionary as he left for Canada before consolidating his L1 literacy skills. He responds well to partner work and is eager to learn.

Case Study 2 - Areas of need for the student include expressive language - written, organization skills, task persistence, and visual memory. The student’s areas of strengths include auditory learning style, gross motor skills, and learning kinesthetically.

For each of these examples, teachers need to ask, “What do I need to teach? How will I teach it? and How will I assess this student’s understanding along the way?”
In addition to referring to the new equity and diversity policy delivered by the Ontario Ministry of Education, a multivolume resource called *A Guide to Effective Literacy Instruction* previously developed by the Ministry offers a continuum of reading and oral development. More specifically, the volumes offer indicators of progression and how to make headway with students from one level to another. With seven volumes in the series, each volume offers both theoretical and practical activities for engaging the junior learner physically, intellectually, socially, and personally. At the same time, activities such as “Cubing,” “double-entry journals,” “Inside-Outside Circle,” and “Extended Name Tags” are described. Definitions and the importance of terms such as “making meaning” and “multi-literate,” are outlined. While these volumes are chronologically based, stages of development are not necessarily measured by chronological age.

The volumes are as follows:

Volume 1 - Foundations of Literacy Instruction for the Junior Learner  
http://eworkshop.on.ca/edu/resources/guides/Guide_Lit_456_Vol_1_Assessment.pdf

Volume 2 - Assessment  
http://www.eworkshop.on.ca/edu/resources/guides/Guide_Lit_456_Vol_2_Assessment.pdf

Volume 3 - Planning and Classroom Management  

Volume 4 - Oral Language  

Volume 5 - Reading  
http://www.eworkshop.on.ca/edu/resources/guides/Guide_Lit_456_Vol_5_Reading.pdf

Volume 6 - Writing  
http://www.eworkshop.on.ca/edu/resources/guides/Guide_Lit_456_Vol_6_Writing.pdf

Volume 7 - Media Literacy  

Have you had an opportunity to view the volumes within *A Guide to Effective Literacy Instruction*?
KNAER Participating Schools

OC SB:
- Our Lady of Fatima
- St. Gabriel
- St. Michael Ottawa
- St. Anne
- St. Thomas More
- St. Michael (Fitzroy)
- St. James
- St. Gregory
- St. Emily

OC DSB:
- Lady Evelyn Alternative School
- Crystal Bay Special Education Centre
- Fisher Park/Summit Alternative School
- Katimavik Public School
- First Avenue Public School
- Devonshire Public School
- Manotick Public School
- Greenbank Middle School
- D. Roy Kennedy Public School
- Charles Hulse Public School
- Emily Carr Middle School
- Dunlop Public School
- Metcalfe Public School
- Henry Larsen Middle School
KNAER Teacher-Leaders

March 8, 2012

OCDSB:
Stephen Baird
John Wolfrain
Cindy Frechette
Janice McGuinness
Stephanie Hagen
James Ireland
Stephen Skoutajan
Laurie Pilon
Riaz Mohammed
Carola Di Felice
Melissa Collins
Angela Burns
Jack Teertstra
Philippa Gross

OCSB:
Jane Hill
Joe Cinanni
Kathleen Martin
Carmela Langdon
Leitte Huot
Carolyn Brambles
Brigitte Montsion
Kristen Charles
Tina Dougan
Paul McGuire
Sandra Forzley
Teresa Zappavigna
Karen Cuddihey
Heather MacPhee
Julia Hardie
Lidia Mihail
Frances Quigley
Christine Marshall
Jennifer King
Alina Orlea
Adrianna Del Chiappa
Sayqa Akhtar
Melissa Hookumchand
Lea Clancy
Jame Bignell
Jillan Treboutat
Tammarra Smith
Erin Duhaime
Mehreen Asif
Michelle Thompson
Caitlin Gale
Troy Davis
Julia Williams
Hannah Gibson
Jess Currie
Jennifer Cheung
Josh Finn
Julia Johnson
Tyler J Freed
Karly Brohman

Tony Marchildon-White
Jaime McGrane
Matt Leiss
Matt Barnett
Genevieve Cloutier
Olivia Kotyck
Natasha Mawji
Meaghan Iwanowski
Genevieve Westrope
Riva Gewarges
Tuyen Nguyen
Alyssa Ramlogan
Lisa Gualtieri
Chantel Borger
Justin Rajala
Leah Danis
Frank Barratt
Chelsea Larock
Justin Lenssen
Duane Rushton
Ashley Erb
An Interview with Stephen Skoutajan
Elementary School Teacher
Devonshire Community Public School

Lisa: How many years have you been teaching? Where and what grades?

Stephen: 20 years. In 1989 I began as a music teacher with the Toronto DSB. I then taught in Ethiopia at an international school for 2 years followed by supply teaching in the Owen Sound board as well as teaching at a private school for 3 years. I’ve been part of the OCDSB since 2003. It’s been quite a journey. I also pursued a Masters degree in education at Antioch University in New England where I focused on integrated and community-based learning.

Lisa: Did you study under David Sobel by chance?

Stephen: Yeah, he was my supervisor.

Lisa: What an opportunity that must have been.

Note: David Sobel is a renowned educator and writer whose work helped to develop the field and philosophy of place-based education. If you are unfamiliar with David’s work, here are a few of his books worth checking out:

- Childhood and Nature: Design Principles for Educators
- Place-Based Education: Connecting Classrooms and Communities
- Mapmaking with Children: Sense-of-Place Education for the Elementary Years
- Beyond Ecophobia: Reclaiming the Heart in Nature Education

Stephen: There is no question that working with David during my Masters studies had a big impact on shaping my teaching philosophy. Experiential learning, place-based learning, understanding our place within community, issues-based literacy... these all frame my thinking as an educator.

Lisa: Why did you get involved in the OCDSB—KNAER Project on environmental sustainability?

Stephen: The environment/community has always been the big umbrella that everything else in my teaching falls under. Through Mobilizing Environmental Sustainability, I am excited about sharing this perspective with new teachers through an inquiry-based learning project.

Lisa: What was your experience as a participant in this project?

Stephen: It was great to be part of a likeminded team. The KNAER experience has refueled me in addition to renewing my faith in education. The whole project was inspiring frankly. In all my years of teaching I haven’t seen such a dynamic... yet necessary... partnership between a faculty of education at a university, public and catholic school boards, experienced teachers, teacher candidates, professors and grad students all working together... as equals... towards meaningful educational change.
Lisa: the theme of our project was environmental sustainability as you know. How familiar were you with the Ontario Ministry of Education’s Environmental Education policy frameworks—‘Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow?’

Stephen: I was aware of them but I hadn’t read them. I’m not much of a document reader. However, when you introduced us to the Natural Curiosity resource out of OISE—an inquiry based approach to environmental learning framed around real schools, real projects, real change... that speaks to me.

Lisa: You are part of the OCDSB’s Environmental Education working group—what is the role, objectives of that group? What is the board’s vision around environmental sustainability?

Stephen: For the most part, it focuses on the Eco Schools certification program - crunching numbers towards more energy efficiency in our schools. Points for this, points for that. Although important, and part of the change towards more sustainable practice, there is much more needed and that’s where the KNAER Project fits in. It is looking at teaching practice, learning strategies and the ways in which education - students, teachers, schools—can engage in and sustain changes in our communities around sustainability.

Lisa: What kinds of knowledge would you like to mobilize and share with other teachers in the school board?

Stephen: learning experiences that address issues in our local communities, as well as an approach to learning that values students’ ideas. Ideas have value and creating spaces for students to share and pursue their ideas is critical.

Lisa: What was your take on the ways in which our project sought to mobilize knowledge on environmental sustainability in terms of different aspects of the project? What worked or did not work?

Stephen: I really like when members of the teaching profession get to tell their story. Innovative teachers who are actively experimenting with inquiry-based learning and who are successfully motivating their students can provide incredible professional development and inspiration. Instructional coaches hired by boards of education may not always have this expertise and are usually hired as literacy and/or numeracy experts. At present, the OCDSB does not have an environmental education coach/coordinator. There are teachers in the system that can provide more direct instruction when it comes to using community as a teaching resource and giving students the opportunity to guide the evolution of idea or project. As pre-service and experienced teachers, we are not looking for specific project ideas/plans to reconfigure and repeat in our classrooms, but instead, we are looking at the different ways teachers are inspiring/empowering their students to take action on an issue. By seeing these projects in action, we can make connections to our own situations so we can begin to hook our own students in new and innovative ways. In the KNAER project I felt respected as a professional in terms of my knowledge, time management and my ability to follow through on a commitment. This was deeply appreciated by all participants. There was never a feeling of hierarchy - teacher candidates, professors, graduate students and experienced teachers all worked together and felt they could speak openly critique, challenge or appreciate the ideas around them. This is the model that will inspire us all to collaboratively empower future generations.

By: Lisa Glithero
I attended the Winter DGPE Institute as a participant observer and while at the various keynotes and workshops, I had the opportunity to chat informally with many of my fellow participants. I invite you to follow me as I attend the 2012 DGPE Winter Institute...

9:00-9:45 Keynote

**H.107-The Youth Effect: Fusing environmental, civic and good education. Lisa Glithero**

I can make change, I’m part of something bigger...
As Lisa tells us, she is not a ‘sage on stage’ by any means-rather she is there to share her own stories and experiences as an educator and a life long-learner. The complex time in which we live presents us with challenging issues that won’t be solved by the same old way of thinking-we need to take risks as educators-we need integrated interdisciplinary, multi-cultural and intergenerational learning and we need to engage the almost limitless potential of youth. We need to ask the big questions together and really listen to what our youth answer, then create the space for them to lead and step back. Watch what happens when we give youth ownership and responsibilities! Let’s use a systems thinking approach and our interconnectedness as the strength to effect change-stay within the system and shift it from the inside...

It is the last few sentences of Lisa’s presentation that really resonated with me—all of her examples were inspiring, but would I ever be able to take students to the Antarctic or build a boat—probably not! But in highlighting student potential to tackle BIG issues, Lisa reminded me that I too can make change happen...locally based, but globally inspired...

Workshop E: 10:00-11:30

**E.41-Humanitarian education as a catalyst for peace: Exploring humanitarian law (EHL). Lana Kuduzovic, Advisor, Humanitarian Issues & Youth Coordinator, Canadian Red Cross**

Showing humanity amidst inhumanity...
Lana introduced the group to a new curriculum ‘tool kit’ that uses the fundamentals of Humanitarian Law as an entry point into discussions of armed conflict and the promotion of peace education. Promoting a deep-rooted respect for the meaning of human dignity, the mutual exploration that both teacher and student engage in is enriched and enhanced by resource material that is linked to local curriculum requirements. The EHL modules are now being tested in Eastern Ontario and a three-day training workshop that includes the complete toolkit is regularly offered in Toronto and if there is enough interest, we were told that a session could be offered at the University of Ottawa’s Faculty of Education. This program has been used for a decade or more internationally and by completing the training you become part of a global network of teachers that form an extended learning community of support. Based on moral principles that focus on community involvement and service to the most vulnerable the kits involve role-plays, real cases of challenging ethical dilemmas, and debate topics, all based on EHL. We were left with this simple statement...*I want to live in a world where...* fill in your own hopes.

Again, it is the final few moments that stay with me as I leave—what rules would these future leaders create to make things better? Lana encouraged us to visit the website of Exploring Humanitarian Law’s virtual campus to explore and access the teacher resources that include five modules, photos, student and teacher videos, additional links, all of which is available to download in fifteen languages. The idea of participating in networked, positive ‘acts of pedagogy’ that encourage us all to move from bystander to humanitarian actor is inspiring to say the least...
Lunch: 11:30-12:30

I had a chance to talk with a few pre-service students after the morning sessions and the phrases that came up included: “really powerful (message)”, “amazing”, “blows my mind”, “eye-opening”, “really encouraging”, “getting a deeper understanding”. Whether it was integrating environmental issues into the classroom, or how to discuss human trafficking with K-6 students, the teacher candidates seemed inspired and empowered by their workshops.

Workshop F: 12:30-2:00

F.47- Raising Global Canadians. Lou Hood

“Around the World in the Blink of an Eye” is a Canadian picture book with a truly global message—that no matter where we live, we are all inter-connected on this tiny blue dot we call home. Lou is a passionate advocate of the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education and her book helps to raise funds and awareness for this goal. We(e) Press is a registered charity that is affiliated with CODE’s Project love and the sale of the book funds books in local languages in schools around the world. Lou is a believer in experiential learning and of connecting youth with one another in order to help others through Youth Ambassadors and Youth Expeditions that challenge kids to live the change.

Lou talked about the generation ‘we’ that has lived all of its life connected to others online—they know how to engage with their peers globally so now we have to get them to act locally. Her advice to all of us is to ‘get passionate about a cause, any cause’ and get involved. The fact is that for her, education is the true ‘game changer’ in global development- it will help address gender issues, food scarcity, water right, climatic degradation and human security. I went away pondering the challenge of how we can raise the moral values and consciousness of children...

Workshop G: 2:15-3:45

G.43- Teaching Social Justice in a Climate of Entitlement. Mary Enns

I don’t lock the doors to the classroom-I lend them my best pens—it’s the message behind that that says ‘I trust you.’

Mary is a gifted teacher (she teaches at Hillcrest High School in Ottawa) and our session proved to be a fast-paced class that involved little lecturing but lots of activities, beginning with the thought provoking NFB short “Neighbours”-truly a “I laughed, I cried” experience! Her focus for citizenship education begins by building a community in the classroom where trust, shared responsibility and mutuality are the foundation. She begins the journey with the students from the self-moving out to the local community—and finally, to the global community, teaching level four citizenship that goes above and beyond the minimum. She challenges everyone to make visible invisible students, visible, but believes it all starts with the teacher who can introduce conflict resolution techniques that again move from the personal to local and finally to the global concept of social justice.

Informed, purposeful and active citizenship where each individual is acting on ones own values...from the personal to the global...trust and mutuality...entitlements, rights and responsibilities...remember their names...all of these concepts challenge me and inspire me as I leave the final workshop of the Institute...
Saving The Trees

1. For my art I have created a two-sided piece. On one side the trees are alive and everything is in full bloom, bright and colorful. On the other side the trees are all dead and everything is dark and dreary. The moon is also dark and foggy.

2. My piece represents helping nature and the dark and light side of life. On the dark side people don’t care about nature and the wilderness is dying. On the light side people care and they are taking care of our world and nursing it back to health and glory. People are planting trees to help nature. I hope that we can change this so that it becomes all light.

3. I am determined to make a difference for the better and I hope that I can make a difference. I am also optimistic that everyone can do their part to help nature. When I am older I hope my friends and I can help plant trees and make a positive difference.

By: Julia Wilkes

Calling for action

Students will appeal for action from their communities by:

- write a letter to a politician
- write a letter to a company requesting that they implement changes in production or packaging
- Create a commercial for you-tube or class website calling for change
- Make a podcast radio show.
- Make a series of announcements for the school
- Create a campaign within the school (water bottle free day)
- Write letters to local agencies to see where they can volunteer
Reflection:
After Lisa Glithero’s keynote address I introduced myself to two teacher leaders who were part of the KNAER project and they were kind enough to invite me to join them and the three teacher candidates they were mentoring as part of their involvement. I had the privilege of chatting with them and asking a few questions about their reactions to the Winter Institute program as well as to the KNAER project and the conversation revealed much of what we envision when we talk about knowledge mobilization and capacity building...and here I mean capacity building that goes beyond pedagogy and curriculum to include engagement, and empowerment-in other words capacity building \textit{writ large}.

The students spoke about how useful it was to have access to a wide variety of resource materials that would have been difficult, if not impossible, to find on their own. Much of the innovative pedagogy is demonstrated in workshop format and the experiential learning that takes place when you participate in an activity was described by all as tremendously valuable.

The workshop presenters were praised, both for their expertise and command of their subject matter, but also for their enthusiasm and on-going availability to the participants (all presenters at the workshops I attended gave out their email addresses).

The teacher-leaders went to a workshop on incorporating social justice into the math curriculum that was presented by a math consultant for the Catholic School Board-and here too we see that the mobilization of practical ‘tools’ and development of feeling capable of effecting real change in the classroom.

‘...today’s Institute and the KNAER project have really brought home that I can make change from inside the system-just like Lisa said this morning-I can’t change everything all at once-but I can choose to do one small thing and be successful-then I can go on to sharing that with other teachers-we’re putting together a human rights fair for a group of 75 grade 6 kids-at the end of this, these kids will have shifted in the way they understand something as basic as the difference between needs and wants, and how they can get involved right now to make the changes they see as necessary...’

KNAER Teacher-Leader
Climate Change and Teaching Mathematics

On January 18, 2012, teacher candidates from the University of Ottawa and teachers from the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board came together in their passion for environmental education. Those in attendance were fortunate to take part in a variety of highly relevant workshops. Among these, was a presentation put together by Professor Richard Barwell entitled “Climate Change and Teaching Mathematics.”

Richard began his thirty-minute workshop by posing an important question. Specifically, he asked, “where is the math in climate change?” After a brief discussion, it was clear that climate change is overflowing with math related topics. In fact, the very definition of climate change is full of math words! According to the Government of Canada, “climate change is a long-term shift in climate measured by changes in temperature, precipitation, winds, and other indicators. Climate change can involve both changes in average conditions and changes in variability, including, for example, changes in extreme conditions.” As such, climate change data can be integrated into a variety of math lessons that can be adapted to meet the needs of any grade level.

Importantly, Richard believes teachers have an important role to play with regard to teaching children how to understand, evaluate and engage with information and that they should strive not to push any one agenda. As such, his model for teaching climate change allows children to interact with real climate change data available on the Environment Canada website. From this website, teachers can download weather data for any Canadian region that might be of interest to their students and can create a data set that meets the needs and abilities of their students. Once this is done, the possibilities are endless. For example, students could create weather graphs, look for weather patterns, shifts or trends or calculate the average temperature. No matter the specific task, children will see firsthand the way that weather patterns are changing. Along with teacher guidance, students will be able to evaluate this information for them and better understand the impact they can have on the earth.
Currently, there is very little about climate change in the Ontario Curriculum. However, this does not mean that it does not have a place in the classroom. Rather, it means that climate change must be integrated across the curriculum. As Richard demonstrated in his workshop, math class is a great place to start! Why not give it a try in your next math lesson?

By Rita Forte

“Today, I participated in a rich math task”

Embedding rich math tasks into classroom practice seems to offer students an opportunity to see why they are learning math and how they can contribute to the future of the environment. I attended the workshop on Teaching Math through an Environmental Sustainability lens with a focus on assessment, facilitated by Dr. Christine Suurtamm. Our task was to design a package for Triscuits that holds the same amount of the product of the package but uses less cardboard.

To accomplish this task, the Handout was entitled “Do we really need all that packaging?” Our tools included the area and volume equation sheet from the EQAO web site, linking cubes, a calculator, a ruler, a measuring tape, pencils, and an empty box of Triscuits. By starting with surface area, our group grappled with the diagram of a rectangular prism on the EQAO equation sheet and the reality of our Triscuit box. The two did not match in terms of perspective and location. Was the length the height? Was the height the length? Was the height the depth? Did it really matter? What about the top and the bottom flaps of the box? Should those be included in the surface area? After arriving at some type of consensus on the measurements using our measuring tape, we started to plug the numbers into the formula.

Our next step was to find the volume of the Triscuit box. We saw the interlocking cubes. What if we used the linking cubes to measure the volume instead of using the formula? Using our two centimetre cubes, we started to measure. We wanted to keep our box intact so we started to fill the empty box with our three-dimensional structures to see how many linking cubes it would take to fill the box. This way we could multiply the length times the width times the height of one cube and then count all of the cubes used to fill the Triscuit box. This would give us the volume to find out how much our package holds. Our 9.5 ounce or 269 g box of Triscuits was barely two-thirds full. While deepening our understanding of geometry and spatial sense, we learned about the footprint of a Triscuit box.

Considering that $245 million dollars worth of Triscuits were sold in the previous year that’s about 122,000,000 Triscuit boxes throughout the world.

After we experienced an example of teaching math through a sustainability lens, Christine Suurtamm provided alternative approaches for using this activity. Rather than giving students a ruler and formula sheets, the box can be divided into pieces. With this approach, some students begin making a new package. She indicated that while working through the activity, students generally design a package that resembles a more cube-like shape. As a team they work to determine if the volume is the same as the original design and if the surface area is reduced. At that time, the question is posed: Why do you think the manufacturer is not using a design that uses less material for the package?
Together all of the groups had the opportunity to discuss the criteria for assessing this rich task. Examples included taking notes and taking snapshots. Participant suggestions included audio, video, and rubrics. While a rubric may be overwhelming to students, using a checklist that contains several criteria and levels can be used. Adding an anecdotal comment so a student can see where he/she is and how to approach another level can also be useful. Generally, this type of activity can be assessed and a mini version of the criteria can be provided to students. An example of an Assessment “Check-bric” was provided which can be adapted to teacher and students’ preferences.

**Educating for Global Citizenship**

This resource includes planning frameworks, lesson plans, support materials, and many links to resources. Developed by ETFO staff and members in collaboration with Drs. Mark Evans and Kathryn Broad, and graduate students at OISE/UT. The authors welcome member feedback.

The KNAER Project experience in the OCDSB

The project in the Ottawa Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) involved 19 teachers, all from different elementary and middle schools, and 35 teacher candidates from the J/I Global cohort at the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa. Together in professional learning communities (PLC), teachers and teacher candidates examined and experientially explored evidence-based research and best practices on environmental learning. Of particular foci were strategies on mobilizing the Ontario Ministry of Education’s policy framework on Environmental Education, “Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow” (2009), into meaningful classroom pedagogy.

Environmental learning has become an increasingly important focus in the OCDSB. The board is a participant in both the Ontario Eco Schools Program and the EarthCARE Canada program; two programs whose overall aim is school and board wide achievement in energy use reduction. An active environmental education working group in the board also exists in hopes of moving pedagogy, school practices and overall school board culture with regards to environmental sustainability beyond the efforts of individual ‘teacher champions.’ The KNAER project was seen as an innovative and collaborative platform to contribute to the above strategic priorities.

From our first full day workshop (December 1st, 2011) together, the OCDSB—KNAER participants framed their project work on the following question: ‘How do we as teachers take up this call (based on the Ontario Ministry policy framework on Environmental Education) to engage students in meaningful community-based change around environmental sustainability?’ The two subsequent full day professional learning workshops (January 18th and March 8th, 2012) built on this guiding question through presentations, breakout seminars and resource sharing that highlighted case studies, working models and/or success stories, while at the same time examined some of the challenges and systematic impediments. In particular, Stan Kozak, lead author on a report by Learning for a Sustainable Future titled “connecting the dots:
environmental education, citizenship and sustainability,” offered rich insights on key learning strategies to consider as we move forward in our project implementation.

In the end, 14 PLC teams created learning experiences for J/I students that embraced an inquiry-based, community-oriented and/or social action project approach with regards to student engagement around issues of environmental sustainability. Local food security units of study to community walks exploring attributes of healthy communities and sustainable local economies to ethical consumerism and character education on engendering agency in youth, are just a few examples of the many paths of inquiry taken up by the PLC teams. The implementation stage varied for each PLC, ranging from a single class activity with students to a multi-month class project. Through varied forms of digital representation each PLC team contributed to a resource sharing network enabling all participants to learn from and challenge one another.

By: Lisa Glithero

The KNAER Project experience in the OCSB

The project in the Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB) involved 17 teachers and 2 Principals, from nine different elementary schools, and 19 teacher candidates from the P/J Global cohort at the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa. Together in professional learning communities (PLC), teachers and teacher candidates examined and experientially explored inquiry based learning in the areas of global issues and social justice concerns. These collaborative inquiries were based on student and teacher interests and were linked to a variety of curriculum and school board based initiatives. Each school set the direction of the inquiry and overall the projects created were linked to the religion curriculum, literacy initiatives, integration with the arts, and social studies/science connections. Several schools incorporated the KNAER projects into existing school initiatives such as “Destination Imagination” and “Aboriginal Perspectives”.
Inquiry based learning has taken an increasingly important focus in the OCSB as evident in literacy, numeracy and student success initiatives. Social justice has been a focus for the Board over time as it is reflected in the Board’s Mission Statement and Guiding Principles. Specifically the values of justice, community, dignity of persons and stewards for creation have been infused into the KNAER projects. The Board’s theme “Though Many We are One Body in Christ” provided a starting point for the school based inquiries and provided an opportunity for elementary junior grade teachers to explore issues of interest. The KNAER project was seen as an innovative and collaborative experience to contribute to the above strategic priorities.

On December 8, 2011, the OCSB—Brenda Wilson, Superintendent of Programs OCSB, encouraged KNAER participants to “let the inquiry come from the students.” Teams were provided four half-days to use the Collaborative Inquiry Action Cycle; Plan, Act, Observe, Reflect; to develop and implement school-based plans. Some teacher leaders used their PLC time to attend with their teacher candidates on February 23, 2012 “Global Outlook, Local Meanings” Conference. All teachers involved appreciated and viewed the flexibility in using the release time for PLCs positively. The final professional learning workshop, March 8, 2012, provided an opportunity to showcase the projects and to look to future of the KNAER partnership. As with the inquiry cycle an emphasis was placed on observing and reflecting on the process. A keynote address by Stan Kozak, lead author on a report by Learning for a Sustainable Future titled “connecting the dots: environmental education, citizenship and sustainability,” offered rich insights on key learning strategies to consider as we move forward in our project implementation. In an inspirational presentation by Kim Bouffard from CHF (Canadian Hunger Foundation) closed the day with the message of empowering youth and the promise of the future.

As with the OCDSB, the nine PLC teams in the OCSB created a wide range of inquiries and learning experiences under the theme of social justice. From the idea of environmental sustainability, to poverty, to education in First Nation Schools, to the power of the individual to make a difference each project combined the knowledge, skills and interests of the participants. Each project demonstrated the power of a single question in the minds of curious and interested individuals.
Word clouds are an intriguing and useful way to display all kinds of information. As an added bonus, they are incredibly easy to create! Keep reading to learn how to make your own word clouds and to find out how we used them in our project...

Our Word Clouds:

On March 8, 2012 teacher candidates from the University of Ottawa and participating teachers from the OCDSB and OCDS and were invited to a final KNAER meeting and encouraged to share their experiences from the project. As part of a culminating exercise, groups of teacher candidates and practicing teachers were asked to record their responses to a series of questions on a large piece of chart paper. Key words from these responses were then converted into word clouds using Wordle, a free service available on the Internet.

Word clouds speak for themselves. Below are three questions we asked participants and the word clouds we generated from their responses:

1. What aspects of this project did you find most exciting, engaging, innovative, creative and/or transformative?

2. What aspects of the project did you find challenging, frustrating, limiting and/or problematic? What do you see if any, as the structural and/or systematic impediments?
3. Where do you see the project going from here? How can this project continue with/without funding support? How would you like to see it evolve?

Make your Own:

To create your own unique word cloud using Wordle, all you need to do is copy and paste (or type) the text you would like to see transformed into the text box provided and then click “go”. Importantly, words that occur more frequently in the source text you provide will appear larger in your finished word cloud. This is what makes a word cloud so interesting! Plus, you can customize your word cloud by changing the font, layout and color schemes to suit your mood or your project. The possibilities are endless.

By: Katrina Isacsson
On behalf of the “Mobilizing a Global Perspective for Educators” project we thank you for your interest.

Please feel free to contact us at

www.developingaglobalperspective.ca

Steering Committee Members:

University of Ottawa - Nicholas Ng-a-Fook, Lisa Glithero, Ruth Kane, Tracy Crowe
OCDSB- Pino Buffone, Nadia Towajj-White, Tracy Snarr, Sharan Samagh
OCSB- Brenda Wilson, Heather McPhee, Kathleen Martin, Carolyn Brambles
Thank you to the University of Ottawa, Faculty of Education Graduate Students