



Overview

In this newsletter, you will find links to practical teaching resources, and a sampling of critical thinking strategies and lesson ideas for elementary teachers, Kindergarten to grade 8.

These tools are offered to educators as they embrace both the challenge and promise of inclusive education.

The *Resources* section of this newsletter provides links to numerous other critical thinking activities as well as a wide list of resources that are available to you in your school or online. While we recognize that this list is not exhaustive, it represents our Board's current thinking on diversity, equity and inclusive education.

Inclusive Education is Critical Thinking

Embedding Inclusive Education in Practice

What is Inclusive Education?

It is about establishing a safe and caring environment in which all children will thrive and succeed.

"Education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in the curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected."

What it isn't

Inclusive education is **NOT** about "political correctness", holidays and celebrations, or more work.

High-Quality Education for All

One of the most powerful

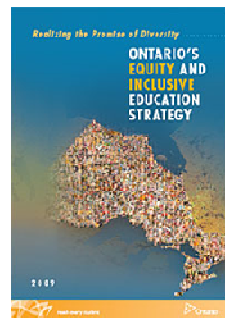
ways to promote high levels of student achievement and to close the achievement gap in education is through the development and implementation of an inclusive education system that works for all people regardless of their individual background (UNESCO, 2008; Ontario 2009; van der Berg, 2009; Glaze et al., 2012).

Canadian society is more diverse than it has ever been. This trend will continue into the foreseeable future. As such, to be successful in the 21st century, equity and inclusive education is essential for the development of our students.

To make equity education transformative, it must be embedded from the earliest grades in everyday activities in

all subjects.

Our schools should be places where students learn about and experience diversity. Students who see themselves reflected in their studies are more engaged and see the relevance of learning.



Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy—Realizing the Promise of Diversity

"Inclusion is not bringing people into what already exists; it is making a new space, a better space for everyone."

George Dei 2006 in *Realizing the Promise of Diversity*; Ontario 2009

Honouring Student Voice — Empowering Children

The OCDSB and OCETF collaborated to produce this compendium of student letters to the Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper.

The students wrote in response to text about *Shannen's Dream* and to raise awareness about aboriginal issues in education.

One copy of this wonderful text, illustrating the point that wisdom comes at all ages, has been sent out to each elementary school in the Board.



For further ideas on Aboriginal Education, follow the link below to access a teacher toolkit on the Ministry of Education website that provides teachers with numerous lesson plans for elementary level students.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/en/g/aboriginal/toolkit.html>

Critical thinking is...

Ongoing, mindful assessment in balanced and responsible ways that are both constructive and reactive conducted alone and with others but always done in light of conscious consideration of relevant criteria. ~TC2

Dear Coach,

How do I begin providing an equitable, safe, and inclusive environment for my students?

Thanks! Cynthia

Dear Cynthia,

You are already doing many things to create a caring environment that is the foundation for improving student achievement. Here are 10 high-impact strategies for being more inclusive in your educational practice.

- Have high expectations of all students. Let your students know that you believe they can succeed. Reject negative stereotypes of students' potential and ability.
- Build relationships—get to know your students personally: their likes, dislikes, interests, and backgrounds.
- Identify character attributes. Focus on developing the whole child (mental,

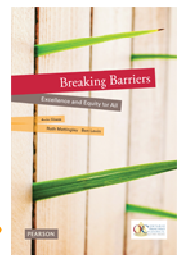
spiritual, emotional, physical).

- Help students feel safe and respected at school. When ever possible, adapt the curriculum to focus lessons on topics of deeper meaning to students.
- Provide opportunities for students to share their ideas orally to refine their thinking.
- Practice culturally responsive teaching by highlighting contributions made by various ethnic, racial, gender, ability groups in classroom studies.
- Select learning materials and resources that reflect the diversity of humanity.
- Maximize student engagement by: using problem-and project-based

learning; providing choice; having students work with peers; and presenting topics of some controversy to stimulate discussion and debate.

- Establish career development to provide multiple entry points in the curriculum.
- Integrate the arts to provide opportunities for deep thinking and purposeful self-expression. (for more ideas see CS newsletter Spring 2012—*Integrating the Arts*)

Adapted from *Breaking Barriers: Excellence and Equity for All (2012)*



Self-Reflection and Cultural Proficiency

As human beings, we make judgments about people within the first minute of meeting them. According to Malcolm Gladwell in *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*, the decisions may occur almost instantaneously. "...snap judgments...rely on the thinnest slices of experience...they are also unconscious." As educators, we must be acutely aware of both the conscious and unconscious judgments we make about our students.

We must be honest with ourselves and "dig around" to get at the root of why we feel the way we do in certain situations.

We must confront our own biases and take steps to modify personal beliefs that are inconsistent with equity and inclusive education principles.

When cultural differences are acknowledged and valued, there is a positive correlation on student learning. The more

accepting we are of the range of diversity, the more likely we are to connect with all learners which, in turn, allows for improvement in educational outcomes (Lindsay, et al. 2006, 2012)

To access a *Classroom Self-Reflection Tool for Teachers*, click on the following link:

<https://sites.google.com/site/ocdsbministryresources/Home/curriculum-services/equity>

Diversity Defined

Diversity refers to the range of human attributes and qualities in society. For the purposes of this newsletter, the many dimensions of diversity have been grouped together as follows: **1) ancestry, culture, ethnicity, language, race, and religion; 2) gender, gender identity, sex, and sexual orientation; 3) age, intellectual ability, physical ability, and size; and 4) class, poverty, and socio-economic status.** Our work in equity education begins with literacy across the curriculum. The rich tasks provided below promote critical thinking through relevant and meaningful contexts that help students focus on the big idea of the common human experience.

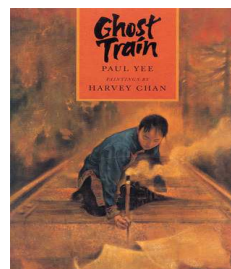
Ancestry, Culture, Ethnicity, Language, Race, and Religion

3-2-1

Choose one powerful image either from the book or one that relates to the theme of the book. Have students study and analyze the picture and record **3** details they notice, **2** inferences they have about the picture, and the **1** most important question they have about the picture.

Ghost Train

by Paul Yee



L'AUTRE RIVE

par Marta Carrasco



Gender, Gender Identity, Sex, and Sexual Orientation

Opportunity-Challenges-Implications Chart

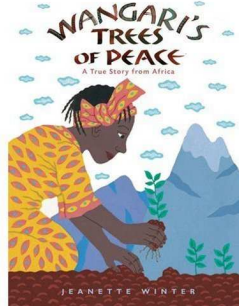
This chart can be created about a text, video, picture, or statement. For example—"What if all cars were yellow?". Students determine:

- what the opportunities or positive aspects of this might be;
- what challenges arise;
- What the implications would be.

This information then leads them to make a reasoned decision.

Wangari's Tree of Peace

by Jeanette Winter



<http://www.media-awareness.ca/francais/index.cfm>

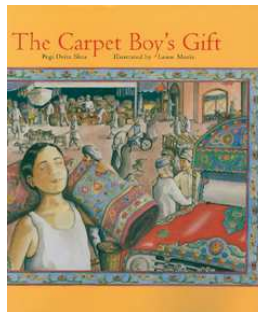
Age, Intellectual Ability, Physical Ability, and Size

Wordle

Wordles can be created and printed from the website www.wordle.net. There are a number of different ways to use them beyond their initial artistic intention. A Wordle including all of the text from a book can be shown to students prior to reading a book to prompt predictions and discussion. Or students can record their thoughts or responses to a text in Wordle form and present that to the class.

The Carpet Boys' Gift

by Peggy Deitzshea



la rédaction

par A. Skarmeta et A. Rueno



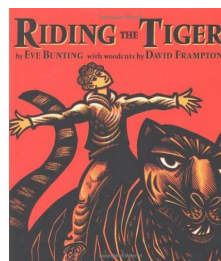
Class, Poverty, and Socio-Economic Status

Concept Chart

Used to help students truly understand difficult vocabulary related to such richly themed books. Students determine examples and non-examples from their own life and from the book for the chosen word. After discussion, a definition of the word is drafted as well as a definition of what it is not.

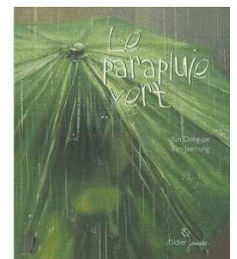
Riding the Tiger

by Eve Bunting



la parapluie vert

par Yun Dong-jae et Kim Jae-hong



"The less socioeconomic factors explain differences in student achievement in your school, the more equitable your school actually is." Dr. Ken Leithwood

Art As Universal Language

Bayshore P.S. Art Show—Spring 2012

Bayshore PS is an elementary school with a high English-Language-Learner population. As such, they turned to the arts to help highlight their students' thinking. The arts allow all students to actively participate, express themselves, and explore their creativity.



References

Ontario Ministry of Education

Equity Education—Quick Facts

<http://edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/EquityQuickFacts.pdf>

Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy

<http://edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/equity.pdf>

Equity and Inclusive Education Policy Implementation Guidelines

<http://edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/inclusiveguide.pdf>

Teaching Mathematics Through A Social Justice Lens. DVD and Teacher's Guide.

<http://resources.curriculum.org/secretariat/justice/index.html>

Build Your Equity and Inclusion Toolkit

Curriculum Services maintains an electronic repository of a variety of resources including supplementary critical thinking activities and book lists for embedding equity education in your classroom.

<https://sites.google.com/site/ocdsbministryresources/Home/curriculum-services/equity>

Equity and Inclusive Education resources:

Around the Rainbow: Toolkit for Educators and Service Providers working with GLBTTO parents and their children. Creating GLBTTO-friendly learning spaces for children 0-6

Breaking Barriers—Companion Site to the Text

http://wps.pearsoned.ca/ca_sch_breaking_barriers/207/53234/13628140.cw/index.html

ETFO—*Social Justice Begins With Me*—offers equity and character lesson plans

<http://www.etfo.ca/Resources/New/SocialJustice/Documents/SocialJustice.pdf>

<http://etfovoice.ca/site/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/ETFO-Voice-Spring2012-Curriculum-Insert.pdf>

Media Awareness Network—ready to use resources for teachers

<http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/index.cfm>

<http://www.media-awareness.ca/francais/index.cfm>

Propeller Dance—offers dance lessons for students with exceptionalities

<http://www.propellerdance.com/>

Thinking Critically about Equity and Media Literacy. By Nancy Adams, 2010. The Curriculum Foundation.

United video—published in 2006 by Youth for Human Rights International

Award-winning and critically acclaimed, *United* is a fresh and electrifying story of one kid fighting for his right to play.

Other Sources

Adichie, Chimamanda. *The Danger of a Single Story*. Tedtalks. Oct 7, 2009

Flessa, J., 2007. *Poverty and Education: Towards Effective Action. A Review of the Literature*. ETFO

Gladwell, M. 2005. *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*. Little, Brown and Company

Glaze, A., Ruth Mattingley, Ben Levin, 2011. *Breaking Barriers: Excellence and Equity for All*. Pearson Canada

Lindsey, R., L. Roberts, and F. Campbell-Jones. 2004. *The Culturally Proficient School: An Implementation Guide for School Leaders*. Corwin Press

van der Berg, S., 2008. *Poverty and education, , Education Policy series, International Academy of Education, International Institute for Educational Planning*

Ministry Monographs

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/capacityBuilding.html>

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/whatWorks.html>

Forging Safer Learning Environments: Addressing Homophobic Bullying

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/WW_safe_learning_environments.pdf

Student Identity and Engagement in Elementary Schools

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/CBS_StudentIdentity.pdf

Engaging Students Through the Arts

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/WW_Engaging_Arts.pdf