

Making Connections

People for Education's annual conference

Summary of the Day

Keynote Speaker – Dr Jean Clinton

*Imagine what a school could be like.

*Power of Relationships

*Achievement & equity, well being

*Connection is Key – Build relationship skills in our children

*Wisdom of elders – Consider the interest of the next 7 generations when decisions are made

*Children are our sacred ones – he/she has the light within, our role is to let that light shine

*We are too busy “stuffing the duck” meaning too much time trying to fit in the curriculum and not enough in letting kids do what they enjoy (let the light shine)

*Promote well-being , stop just “covering the content” who you are is what makes kids flourish

*Kids want connection not just a teacher who teaches

*Don't reward kindness with certificates etc. as then it starts making kids be kind just for the reward only and only being kind when they think someone is watching to reward.

*Kids with flourish and thrive if there is a love of learning

*Stress Behaviour not misbehaviour – learn the difference is behaviour that is stress based to help resolve issues rather than just punish what we think is misbehaviour.

*”kids will do well if they can, not if they want to”

*Well-being of staff not just students, stress contagion. When teachers are stressed students are stressed.

*Normalize anxiety that's not a diagnosed disorder. Show children that they are not alone in their feelings. There is a difference between stress and diagnosed anxiety.

*”Education more about lighting the fire than filling the pail”

*Example scenario – grade 1 student wants to do robotic work with Lego but can't because they have to study for weekly spelling test. (let their light shine)

*We have 2 ears and one mouth for a reason

*Connecting – how do we spend our time with our children, relationships matter.

*Class sizes affect ability to connect with students, 30 kids in JK/SK is too many. Later grades QUALITY of support teachers get is key not classroom size.

Information from Slides Jean Clinton presented:

Well-being is that positive sense of self, spirit and belonging that we feel when our cognitive, emotional, social and physical needs are being met. As our Indigenous partners have long known, healthy development of the mind, body and spirit is contingent on balance and interconnectedness.

First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework

- Mental Well-being is about having
- A sense of purpose,
- Hope,
- Belonging,
- And meaning in our daily lives

Imagine.....

- That every child and youth in Ontario would receive a warm greeting from staff and fellow students as they arrived at school each day
- That students would begin the day ready to learn, after a check-in from teachers who take the emotional temperature in the classroom prior to starting lessons
- That students would learn and practice social-emotional development skills each day at school, as part of the regular curriculum
- That students went out of their way to watch for and help other students, through formal peer mentoring, and individual acts of kindness
- That parents and families would be engaged in student learning and school life and that the school would be a hub for community activity

And then imagine.....

- If we could collaboratively achieve this vision, what an amazing place Ontario would be for children and youth to grow and learn – with a strong sense of belonging, meaning, purpose and hope.

The Development of the Whole Child

Physical – Development of the body, influenced by physical activity, sleep patterns, healthy eating, and healthy life choices.

Cognitive – Development of abilities and skills such as critical thinking problem solving creativity and the ability to be flexible and innovative.

Social – Development of self-awareness, a sense of belonging, relationships with others, and collaboration and communication skills. Includes the development of identity (individual, social group, spiritual/religious), self-concept, and self-esteem.

Emotional – Involves learning about experiencing emotions, and understanding how to recognize, manage, and cope with them. Includes emotional self-regulation, empathy, motivation, risk taking.

All Young People need:

- Strong foundational skills that support perseverance, adaptability and self-awareness
- The capacity to communicate, collaborate, and imagine solutions to complex problems
- Knowledge and habits that will allow them to take care of their physical and mental health
- A deep understanding of the roles and responsibility of citizenship, and the capacity to engage as citizens

- Curriculum and school-based programs that will prepare them for a range of possible futures

Draft Transferable Skills MofEd

- Critical Thinking
- Innovation and Creativity
- Self Directed Learning
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Citizenship

<p>Conditions for Powerful Learning:</p> <p>Safe Environment</p> <p>Personal Investment</p> <p>Real World Application</p> <p>Fun</p> <p>Relevance to their Lives</p> <p>Social</p> <p>Interesting Questions</p> <p>Positive Environment</p> <p>Real Audience</p> <p>Passion</p> <p>Teachers/Mentors</p> <p>Autonomy and Agency</p> <p>Challenging</p> <p>Not time constrained</p>	<p>What people never say:</p> <p>Sitting in Rows</p> <p>45/60/88 minute blocks</p> <p>One sized curriculum</p> <p>One subject area focus</p> <p>Age grouped co-learners</p> <p>No real world application</p> <p>Teacher controlled</p> <p>Someone else’s questions</p> <p>Standardized assessments</p> <p>Emphasis on grades</p> <p>Carrots and sticks</p> <p>No choice/no agency</p> <p>Lack of relevance</p> <p>“handing it in”</p>
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“people are made, not born”

The “Growth mindset”

Effort-Based Ability: Crucial messages

- “This is Important”
- “you can do it”
- “I won’t give up on you”

Moments of Failure

- The time when students are most susceptible to messages, both positive and negative about their potential
- All students more likely to persevere if classroom context helps positive mindset
- Post-it “I’m giving you these comments because I have very high expectations and I know that you can reach them”

What do all students need:

- A warm welcome
- A smile
- A chance to learn
- A safe place to risk
- A connection to a caring adult, every day
- Someone who notices when something is wrong
- Someone who reaches out when they notice

- Someone who listens, and tries to find help for them
- Someone who believes in them, and instills hope

Panel #1 Pushing the Limits – Aaron Warner, Teacher; Nancy Steinhauer Author/Principal; Aaron Prosper student and indigenous representative; Ingrid, parent; Kelly Gallagher-Mackay Author & educator

- Stop focusing so much always on what is wrong, look to what is going right
- Genius hour – kids choose topic of interest and they learn about it
- Math and the playgroup (example of letting kids solve issues) – a couple of grade 4 students researched the data for incidents on the playground. Discovered more incidents at lunch and in the afternoon, drafted a new supervision schedule not changing the minutes each teacher has to supervise but covering the times when most incidents occur
- Right To Play, set up a play leaders program for the playground. Organize games the older students can run for the younger ones

I Want That conversation

Each Panellist were told to come up with one question parents could ask

Kelly – What are you doing to prepare my child to change the world?

Nancy – What are you teaching that matters to my kids? How do you know it matters?

Aaron W. – how are we investing in our students? How do we know them?

Ingrid – How is your school system building the school for parent involvement?

Aaron P. – What are you doing to go beyond the calls to action and not just check the boxes? What are you doing to teach your children to go beyond?

School closing workshop

Didn't really learn anything new with this workshop.

- Over 120 schools slated for closure
- If government funding went to each student then each student should get \$12,100, however, that's not how it gets allocated.
- Cost to fix outdated schools versus cost of closing or building new taken into consideration
- Borders of schools changed – harder to do, no one every happy with outcome
- Effects of rural school closings – families will move, new families won't move to the area

Communities School Alliance

Rural & Norther Enhancement Fund

Pupil Accommodation Reviews

Community Hub Funding for surplus space

www.communityhubontario.ca

Panel #2 Assessment and Reporting – Panellists were: Sam Seller, Nora Marsh Head of EQUA, Ian Pettigrew from teachers federation

Sam

- Datafication (measurement) saturates and supports our lives
- Data often misused for political purposes but can also be used to hold them accountable
- Data are not facts they are rhetorical
- Large-scale assessments can be used to – Define and monitor what ‘counts’; To create systems of rewards and sanctions; To justify the need for change.
- We can debate the ability to meaningfully assign numbers to education; the rationality of data (mis)use; and the negative consequences of data. But we should be asking: What kinds of large-scale assessments do we want in our schools?

Nora

- “hope” – Grade 10 english student that couldn’t read, how did they get to grade 10 without anyone knowing they couldn’t read
- Can’t just use EQAO data
- There’s a need to modernize the EQAO Testing
- Consideration into children’s stress “anxiety” over the test
- Possibilities – looking at the questionnaire students take at the end of the test

Ian

- Looking at little pixels instead of the big picture
- Teachers are key agents
- Teachers make in the moment micro decisions
- EQAO to students is what an autopsy is to a patient.....too little too late
- Large scale testing causes stress induced anxiety in students
- Takeaways – teachers are learners too, don’t fixate on pixels look to the bigger picture
- Quote from student “I am more than a dot on a chart”
- Presented slide from EQAO website – Want a complete picture of how your children are doing in school? Ask their teacher not their EQAO results.

SUMMARY -

No one type of assessment will satisfy everyone. EQAO allowed them to allocate extra funding to areas in need. There’s a need to report out in a different way. Report only as a slice of the pie.

Workshop – Fundraising and Equity

In my opinion this workshop was more of a bashing of fundraising. They showed that lower income schools fundraise \$1 for every \$49 the top 10% raise. However the data presented is flawed. Out of 4757 school principals surveyed only 20% even responded. The responses were varied in that some could be including charity fundraising such as Terry Fox and Jump rope for Heart. A more diverse set of questions needs to be presented such as charity funds, school council fundraisers, student council fundraisers, Grades 7/8 fundraisers, Sports team fundraisers etc. Every school fundraises differently so this workshop was flawed. They don’t feel a school should be fundraising for a scoreboard for example as this doesn’t enhance our children’s education at all. There was a suggestion made that schools should have fundraising

sub-committees so that parent council didn't focus on fundraising. Also suggested that surveys be done at the start of the year to ask parents if they wanted to fundraise and what types of fundraising they wanted to do. It was also suggested that an option be given to just cut a cheque at the start of the year and do no fundraising. Some schools indicating they were fundraising for essentials and others for electronics and scoreboards.