

# JR IDEAS SAVINGS



THE  
NEWSLETTER  
OF  
THE  
ONTARIO  
ASSOCIATION  
OF  
JUNIOR  
EDUCATORS

OCTOBER  
2011



## Reprise...

With the launch of the new Ministry of Education website on Financial Literacy we thought it was a good opportunity to revisit some of our most frequently requested articles/activities from previous editions of the newsletter dealing with that very same topic.

In Spider Ladders and Cookie Factory learn about how a couple of very creative teachers took some enthusiastic kids and not only developed a hugely successful fund-raising opportunity to pay for a field trip, but also used it as a way to fully engage their students in learning about finances and entrepreneurship.



# NEW Financial Literacy Resources

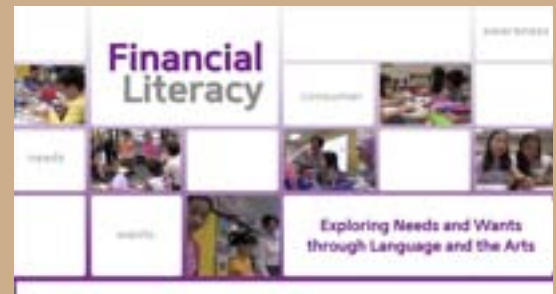
The Ontario Ministry of Education has just launched a new set of web-based resources intended to support the area of financial literacy.

The Financial Literacy GAINS site was launched on September 30th, 2011 and can be found at <http://www.edugains.ca/newsite/financialLiteracy/index.html>.

Along with the scope and sequence of learning expectations for grades 4-8 and 9-12 you will find the just-released videos with examples of cross-curricular/subject specific approaches and links to financial literacy organizations.



Accompanying viewing guides help teachers translate the video resources to practice in their own classrooms.



Check out this excellent tool for enhancing your professional practices in the area of financial literacy and cross-curricular connections.

## Classroom-ready Ideas for Teachers of Grades Four Through Six

# JOIN OAJE FOR FREE!

The Ontario Association of Junior Educators (OAJE) provides a network for education professionals to share ideas and resources, to assist and support teachers and to advocate on behalf of students and teachers in the Junior grades.

Members of OAJE receive a newsletter outlining news, events, conferences and teaching tips. They are also invited to provide input, information and opinions for the Ministry of Education about issues of importance to Junior Division teachers. And, by joining, you will be sure to receive all future editions of this newsletter, along with lots of other valuable teaching ideas.

To become a member of OAJE, simply register online at <http://oajemembership.eventbrite.com>

# Collecting Words

Build your word wall with cards or on chart paper, focusing on words that can be used for special purposes. You can do this with your class in spare moments, and add to the lists as the year goes along. The kinds of words you collect depends on the needs of your class - and the topics that students might be using in their writing.

loud words

dry words

slow words

serious words

people words

conceited words

serious words

joyful words

colour words

gentle words

lazy words

tasty words

hurried words

soft words

harsh words

frivolous words

odd words

private words



# More Than a Play

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario received funding from the Ministry of Education's Equity and Inclusive Education Branch to develop resources to complement the Ontario Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.

The resource includes eight original scripts which were written by Canadian playwrights. Each short script (4 to 6 pages) includes an equity and social justice theme (e.g. Classism, Racial Bias, Ageism, Immigration, Cyberbullying, Homophobia).

The resource, which includes French translation of the scripts, has been created for students ages 9 through 13. The scripts, discussion and response activities invites teachers and their students to participate in drama and literacy activities that promote empathetic understanding reflection and critical thinking.

In the spring of 2011, drama educators Bob Barton, Debbie Nyman and Larry Swartz travelled to twenty communities throughout the province to provide professional development sessions to over 400 teachers and occasional teachers. Perhaps you know a teacher who attended one of the workshops. A copy of one of the workshop strategies is included here:

## Sharing a Social Justice Memory

Each of the playwrights has chosen to share a Social Justice memory to introduce his/her script. These stories can serve as a model for students to tell - or write - their own Social Justice memory that happened to them, to someone they know or someone in a book or the media. To prepare students to share their stories, the list of social justice topics is written on a chart. Each student is invited to choose one of these issues and share it with one or two classmates. Students can then retell a story that they heard from someone else either in or out of role.

Copies of **More Than a Play** are available from shopETFO ([www.etfo.ca](http://www.etfo.ca)) as a cost of \$5.00 each plus shipping and HST.

Call (416)962-3436 or 1-888-838-3836 for more information)



# The Unplanned Inquiry



There is not just ONE curriculum at work in our classrooms - but rather, a number of them all functioning simultaneously.

First, there is the intended curriculum. This is the one which we plan so carefully using the Ministry of Education guidelines. However, there is also the learned curriculum. This is what the students ACTUALLY learn from the program we have so carefully planned.

The Ministry of Education documents are the formal curriculum, however in our classrooms every day there is yet another at work - the informal curriculum. The informal curriculum is, by its nature, multifaceted. It might be the emphasis we place in our teaching - the degree to which we engage our students in creative problem-solving or working collaboratively. It might be our enthusiasm for the topic being studied or the activity we are doing with our students. It is real, it is ever-present in our classrooms, and it has a powerful influence on the learning that is taking place.

This article describes an opportunity taken by a teacher to follow the interests of his students. In doing so, he didn't abandon the formal, intended curriculum but rather looked at learning from an emergent perspective - and incorporated an opportunity for his students to take the lead with his classroom program for a brief period of time.



## Beginnings

It all started with a leaf. Last fall one of my students showed up one morning with a very large and quite colourful autumn leaf. He told me that he wanted to save the leaf and asked how he might best preserve it. I told him that I wasn't sure, but later that morning we posed his question to the whole class.

I was surprised by the interest that my students showed in this question. We brainstormed all of the ways that the students thought you might be able to preserve a leaf and noted them on a piece of chart paper.

## The Ideas

I suggested that the students might want to ask adults who they know if they have any ideas, and mentioned that they might want to look up the question online and see if there are more ideas there. A few days later we revisited the question and listed all of the ideas that we found.

*Put the leaf between the pages of an old book.*

*Place a sheet of wax paper (or paper towel) on top of and underneath the leaf and pile books on top of it.*

*Bury the leaf in dry sand or rice.*

*Soak the leaf in a dish of glycerine.*

*Place the leaf in a plastic bin with silica gel (the material that is packaged with electronics to keep out moisture)*

I asked the class for volunteers to test each of the different methods, and was surprised when all of the students raised their hands. For some reason, this question just seemed to capture their interest.

## The Groups

Students were organized into inquiry groups. We brainstormed what 'rules' we would follow in doing each of the tests to ensure that they were 'fair'. The students wanted to control the variables - so we decided that we would test the same kinds of leaves from the same trees. All leaves would be about the same size and collected on the same day from the trees.

## Observations and Data

### Gathering

The students had decided that they would take digital pictures at each step of their investigation. We had asked parents in the school to donate old digital cameras earlier in the year - and had received some fourteen to use amongst the classes. I booked the cameras and students who didn't already have access to one, were able to take one home.

### Endings

After two weeks of working on their inquiry in any free time that they had, the students concluded this activity by doing a presentation for their classmates about what technique they tried, their observations and conclusions about its effectiveness. In the end they did all agree that one particular technique was the most effective - I will let you try this with your class to find out which it was. But the most important learning in this unplanned inquiry was left to me. I learned that every once in a while I needed to break away from the formal, planned curriculum - and follow the interests and questions of the students. Their greatest motivation was seen when they were finding answers to questions they themselves had asked and were interested in finding the answer to.



# Spider Ladders

It was fund-raising season at our school. Typically, the School Council raised money through chocolate bar sales, cookie dough sales, Hallowe'en candy sales . . . none of it focused on nutrition or healthy lifestyles and none of it contributing to my instructional program.

Some years back I met a wonderful teaching friend from British Columbia. Brian Herrin is one of the most creative and engaging teachers I have ever had the pleasure of meeting and working with. He is able to captivate all students, young and old. Brian had once shown me something that his class had done as a fund raiser - spider ladders.



Have you ever come home or gotten up in the morning and gone into your bathroom only to discover a spider in your bathtub? Well, the spider didn't intend to startle you. Every home has spiders . . . if not, you have some other insects and creatures living there instead. Spiders need water. So, every once in a while the spider seeks out a source of water to drink. Your bathtub often has a handy ring of water that didn't completely drain when you or someone in your house last had a bath. The spider slides on down into your bathtub, drinks the water - but when she tries to climb out, the slippery side of the tub has her sliding back in. She is stuck there until you or someone else comes home and notices her problem.

This is where the spider ladder comes in. The spider ladder is simply two small plastic (or wooden) beads tied onto each end of a metre long piece of chenille (fuzzy) wool. That's it. To use the spider ladder you just lay it over the side of your bathtub so that any hapless spiders that wander into your tub have a handy way to climb out.

Once I explained what a spider ladder was to the kids in my class they saw the possibilities. We brainstormed what might need to be done if we were going to mass produce spider ladders. We needed some money to purchase our raw materials (wool, beads, plastic lunch bags), so we sold 'shares' in our spider ladder company for a dollar. We didn't need a lot of money to get started, so we only sold fifty shares - mainly to our Principal, other teachers and staff at the school.



The students worked for an hour each day for two weeks on the project. They were members of a team charged with a specific responsibility.



some students handled the purchasing of materials and the money we earned on our sales



some students did the 'manufacturing' of the spider ladders (assembling the parts into a sandwich bag)



one group of students developed the instructions card and small "Bathroom Book of Spiders" we included with each ladder (the book contained spider jokes and little-known-facts about spiders)



one group was charged with developing the marketing plan and the distribution of the spider ladders (local stores carried our spider ladders during the first two weeks of December)



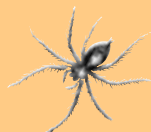
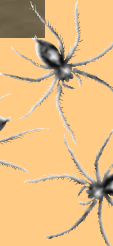
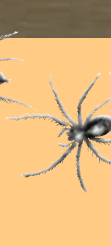
Our marketing team did a wonderful job of getting the word out about our 'unusual' product. Two local radio stations featured students explaining how the spider ladder worked. One of our television stations did a story about our project and filmed the students when they were manufacturing the spider ladders.

The group producing the small book included in the package and designing the paper insert that went into the sandwich bag with the spider ladder convinced the Principal to 'donate' the paper and photocopying they needed to do to produce enough packages.

Two parents volunteered to drive members of our distribution team around to the various businesses that had agreed to sell our product. The students quickly realized that we needed to create some sort of display for our product so the manufacturing group got busy creating a way to showcase our spider ladders in a decorated shoebox that sat on the sales counter. The purchasing group created 'model' spiders that would hang in some stores above our counter-top display.

In the end, we sold all five hundred spider ladder packages we created - in just two days!! The class decided that we needed to get into production again as the stores that were carrying the spider ladders were calling and asking for more. Since most of the 'up front' work had been done, it didn't take too many recesses and lunch times to make another five hundred spider ladders. We sold four hundred of these within the next two weeks. The final hundred were 'marked down' from our original asking price of \$2.00 - to \$1.00, and they quickly sold as well.

So, we started with an initial investment of \$50.00. We repaid that investment on the basis of 200% per share - a total of \$100.00. (our Principal was thrilled) After the expenses we had to produce the second batch of 500 spider ladders, we actually made a profit of \$1 850.00. In the end, we learned a lot about setting up a business, doing a business plan, running a business, and dealing with the public . . . and - we saved a lot of spiders.



# THE COOKIE FACTORY



Given the Ministry of Education's direction on developing Healthy Lifestyles, and the school food and beverage policy, the teacher in this story worked with her Principal to focus on healthier versions of cookies for her class to manufacture and sell over the two week period of this project.

Even though this would certainly meet the 'exemption for special-event days' criteria, Mrs. Ackerman and her class decided that they were going to make their cookies as healthy as possible, researching on-line recipes for healthy cookie alternatives.



The hottest business in town hasn't just opened in the local mall. It can be found in the classrooms and on the playground at Lakeshore School.

Like any business, this one started from a need. Mrs. Ackerman's class needed to raise money to pay for a field trip. Rather than selling chocolate bars, magazine subscriptions or having a car wash, this class decided to start their own business to earn the money.

After brainstorming all of the possibilities, Mrs. Ackerman's class decided to start, of all things, a cookie factory.

To get started, the class had to divide into teams. Each team was responsible for doing a specific job, even before the first cookie was made.

## Marketing and Research Team



This group of students had to design and carry out a survey of students in the school to find out what kind of cookies would be the best choice to make and sell. So they set about creating a survey and conducting it on the playground. They had to think about what questions to ask and how to make sure that they didn't ask people more than once. They put all of their survey information together and presented it to the entire class. The number one choice of cookie for students in their school was chocolate chip.

The next task for this group of students was to create a plan to advertise the cookies once they were ready to go on sale. Making posters, writing school P.A. announcements and designing signs all kept this team busy once the initial survey was finished.

## Production Team



Even though this group is responsible for planning and doing the actual baking of the cookies, their work started well before the first cookie was made. They asked Moms, Dads, the school custodian and even the Principal to share their favourite cookie recipe. They went through all of the recipes they gathered and, with the help of their parents, each team member made one of the finalist recipes at home so that they could bring in samples and have the rest of the class vote on the best tasting cookie.

Once they had decided on which recipes they would use, this team figured out what ingredients they needed and how much of each they would need for their first week's sales. Then they had to meet with a parent volunteer who was going to help out with the baking, and plan out how who was going to do each cookie making task.

## Finance and Purchasing Team



To start out, the Cookie Factory needed some money to purchase the ingredients for their cookies. Like real businesses, they designed and sold shares in their company to investors for \$2.00 each. They had to explain the company's plan to possible investors and convince them to invest their money in the business. Selling two hundred shares, they had enough money to purchase the ingredients they needed, to rent the cookie sheets and bowls to do the actual baking and the plastic lunch bags to package their cookies for sale.

They needed to figure out how much the cookies cost the company to make and what a reasonable price could be charged for a plastic bag with two cookies.

Once that was done they needed to find the stores with the best prices where they could purchase the company supplies. They developed a way to keep track of the money they were spending and earning with the cookie sales. They needed to report how well the company was doing toward the goal of raising money for the field trip to the rest of the class, and in the end, to determine how much money had to be repaid to the investors.

## Sales Team



This group was responsible for selling the cookies on the school playground at recess. They designed a booth, organized how they were going to handle the money and decided on a plan to sell as many cookies as they could in the short recess time. They developed a way to keep track of how many cookies they were selling each day and how much money they should receive.



## In Business

The first few days of business went very well for the Cookie Factory. The production team arrived at school, and under the guidance of the parent helper, the school staff room was soon filled with the aroma of chocolate chip cookies.

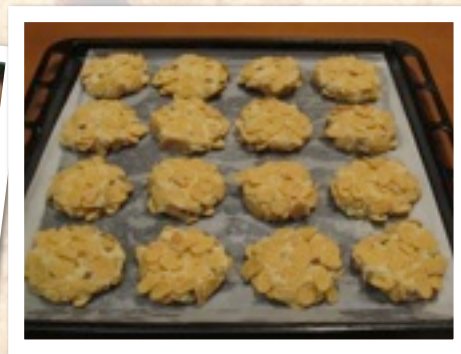
The cookies were packaged ready for sale before the start of school, and just before recess the sales team went into action. The entire production of cookies sold out in just a few minutes. In fact, that entire week saw super sales, where all of the cookies sold out each day. Things were looking very good for the Cookie Factory, but it was not going to last. The following week, disaster struck.

On Monday, less than half of the cookies were sold. The sales team was panicking and the entire class was concerned. They decided to have the Marketing and Research Team interview students on the playground at lunchtime to see what had happened to convince so many students to not buy the cookies. It didn't take long to discover the problem. It was quality control.

Students purchasing the cookies would pay the same price for a larger cookie as they would a smaller one. The production team who were making the cookies hadn't figured out a way to make them all the same size. Some of the cookies were huge and others were tiny. The class talked about ways they could make the cookies all of the same size. They thought about making a cardboard circle for each cookie so that they would all look the same, but they realized that the cardboard might burn in the oven or the cookie dough might stick to it. Finally, they decided on a solution. They would weigh each blob of cookie dough before it was put on the cookie sheet. In that way they could tell their customers that all of the cookies had the same amount of dough, even though they might be slightly different in size.

The Marketing and Research Team designed another advertising campaign to let the students in the school know about the improved cookies and the Sales Team decided to sell all of the cookies left over from recess time at the end of the school day for half price.

By the end of the week, the cookies were selling out at recess again and the Cookie Factory decided to add a new, soft gingersnap cookie to the product line. Again, each team had to do their job to make sure that this new type of cookie was going to sell to the students at recess time.



## Success

The Cookie Factory lasted exactly four weeks in Mrs. Ackerman's class. During that time it made all of the money for the field trip and every investor was paid \$2.50 for each of the shares that they had purchased. They even had enough money to pay for a lunchtime pizza party on the last day in order to celebrate their success.

During the course of the Cookie Factory, the students explored what it was like to start a business. They visited three local food service businesses – a bake shop, a candy factory and a donut shop – in three separate groups. Upon returning each group shared what they had learned about running a business with the rest of the class.

In the end, it had been a lot of work. Some days were more fun than others. Students had to learn to work together to make the Cookie Factory a success.

## Next Year . . .

The Cookie Factory was such a success that it looks like something you might want to do another year. Mrs. Ackerman has decided that she will be doing a new project this year with the kids in her class to raise money for a field trip - the

**Flavoured Popcorn Factory.**

