

Title of Project: Knowledge Mobilization through Collective Pedagogical Inquiry in Schools Serving Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

Project Lead: Jim Cummins

Lead Institution: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto

Project Partners: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto, Peel District School Board (PDSB), Toronto District School Board (TDSB), Western University

Ministry Priority: Teaching and Learning, Equity, Engagement

Brief Background: Relatively little attention has been paid to the specific instructional challenges and opportunities involved in teaching students from multilingual backgrounds. The project will identify and actively disseminate through the Language-as-Resource website evidence-based and classroom-validated instructional strategies that address the challenges and opportunities involved in teaching culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students.

Research Context: The project has worked closely over a two-year period with educators in one highly diverse K-5 elementary school that has demonstrated consistently strong grade 3 EQAO results over several years. Project staff together with teachers and administrators in the school used the Literacy Engagement framework (Cummins & Early, 2011) as a catalyst for discussing the research evidence and its potential application to the school's continuing efforts to implement optimally effective instruction. Teachers shared with project staff the outcomes of projects they had implemented with the express purpose of capitalizing on the cultural wealth that students brought to school. As a result of this collaborative work, the Literacy Engagement framework has been elaborated and a set of instructional principles for effective instruction in highly diverse schools has been articulated.

Knowledge Mobilization Activities: Working with Dr. Kristina Montero of Wilfred Laurier University, the project has expanded its scope to gather data from First Nations high school students who were interviewed about their schooling and how their schooling experiences intersected with their emerging sense of self. This focus builds on one of the major themes that emerged from the project's work with elementary school educators who highlighted the powerful impact on student engagement that derived from weaving a focus on student identity into the life of the school. These interviews are in the process of being compiled and edited into a video that will be disseminated through the project's "Language-as-Resource" (LAR) website which will be operational in February 2013.

The project findings have also been extended and applied to collaborative work with educators in an elementary school with a large proportion of Roma students. Dr. Burcu Yaman Ntelioglou and Dr. Rahat Naqvi are working with parents and students together with the school librarian and teachers to support the creation of what we have termed "identity texts". These will also be disseminated through the LAR website.

Outcomes: The instructional approaches that have been developed collaboratively within the project are currently being synthesized into a practice-oriented volume intended for educators. This hard-copy volume, tentatively titled Instruction through a Multilingual Lens will introduce educators to the principles underlying the framework and provide brief accounts of a large number of classroom activities that can be implemented in linguistically and culturally diverse school contexts. These accounts will be elaborated in multimedia form on the LAR website. It is anticipated that this volume will be produced in collaboration with Dr. Rahat Naqvi of the University of Calgary with whom we have collaborated during 2012 and 2013.

