



Enrichment Clusters

What is an Enrichment Cluster?

- ❖ An enriching opportunity for the whole school community.
- ❖ A learning opportunity where knowledge and skills are applied to the solution of a real problem or issue (i.e. climate change, school grounds restoration...)
- ❖ A multi-age group of individuals with the same interest.
- ❖ An investigative-type of activity in which students assume the roles of practicing professionals (i.e. writers, artists, engineers, environmentalist, gardener...)

When does it happen?

- ❖ It happens during a bloc of time that has been set aside especially for the purpose of enrichment for the whole school. (i.e. every Friday afternoon for 6 weeks)

Why should the School Enrichment Team organize an Enrichment Cluster?

- ❖ The objective is to create a product to be shared with an audience.
- ❖ The goal is to develop self-directed learning skills in planning, problem solving, organization, cooperation, self-confidence and creativity.
- ❖ An opportunity for students to interact with adults who share the same interests.

What is the role of the teacher or the facilitator?

- ❖ Guide the student in selecting a challenging project.
- ❖ Help the student in identifying responsibilities, resources and develop an action-plan.
- ❖ Make sure activities are student-driven, with the adult playing an advisory role.

Major Features of Enrichment Clusters

THEME: Every student is *special* if we create conditions that make each student a *specialist* in a *specialized* group.



- 1- **The Golden Rule of Enrichment Clusters:** All activity is directed toward the production of a product or a service.
- 2- Students and teachers select the clusters in which they will participate. All students and teachers are involved.
- 3- Students are grouped across grade levels by interest areas.
- 4- There are no predetermined lesson or unit plans.
- 5- The authentic methods of professional investigators are used to pursue product and service development
- 6- Divisions of labor are to guarantee that all students are not doing the same thing.
- 7- Specially designated time blocs are set aside for clusters.
- 8- **The Silver Rule of Enrichment Clusters:** The rules of regular schooling are suspended.

Implementing an Enrichment Cluster

Step 1: Learn about the interests of the students and staff.

- ❖ **Gather information using various surveys.**

Step 2: Set up a database

Step 3: Create a schedule

- ❖ **Minimum period of 6 weeks**
- ❖ **Recommended 8-10 weeks**

Step 4: Locate people to facilitate clusters

- ❖ **All teachers should facilitate a cluster or assist a volunteer**
- ❖ **Seek involvement from the parents and community**

Step 5: Provide orientation for the facilitators

- ❖ **Seek a common understanding of guiding principles about enrichment clusters.**

Step 6: Register students for clusters that interest them.

- ❖ **Design a brochure**
- ❖ **Students select 3 choices**
- ❖ **Students are placed in a cluster**

Step 7: Celebrate your success with the community

Source: Challenge for Excellence: Enrichment Clusters, Nova Scotia Education, 2005



SIX KEY QUESTIONS



(For a successful Enrichment Cluster or TYPE III Investigation)



What do people with an interest in this area do?



What product do they create and/or what services do they provide?



What methods do they use to carry out their work?



What resources and materials are needed to produce high quality products and services?



How, and with whom, do they communicate the results of their work?



What steps need to be taken to have an impact on intended audiences?