



Cathy Griffin & Avis Dalgarno, Bluewater District School Board, Grey County, Ontario

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**Video url:** <https://youtu.be/9kGvxZLcvQY>

In the 2014-15 school year we co-facilitated a professional learning community collaborative inquiry focused on English Language Learners with funding from The Ontario Ministry of Education. We encouraged nine primary teachers to engage in successive action research cycles around questions which the group identified over time. The main research theme became, "How might listening to student voice improve our practice?"

As facilitators looking to improve our practice, we participated in an international virtual Skype culture of inquiry. This group came about as Cathy and the other Bluewater Action Research Network (BARN) facilitators sought a way of engaging with practitioner researchers they had met presenting their work at conferences over the past two years. Our participation in ARNA has been funded through the BARN project by the Ministry of Ontario Teaching Leadership and Learning Project.

List of our publications with urls where available

- Delong, J., Campbell, E., Whitehead, J. & Griffin, C. (2013) '[How are we creating cultures of inquiry with self-studies that transcend constraints of poverty on empathetic learning?](#)' Presented at the 2013 American Educational Research Association Conference in San Francisco with the Theme: Education and Poverty: Theory, Research, Policy and Praxis.
- Campbell, L., Delong, J., Griffin, C., & Whitehead, J. (2013) 'Introduction to living theory action research in a culture of inquiry transforms learning in elementary, high school and post-graduate settings.' Educational Journal of Living Theories, 6(2); 1-11. Retrieved April, 2015 from <http://ejolts.net/node/211>
- Griffin, C. (2013) 'Transforming teaching and learning practice by inviting students to become evaluators of my practice.' Educational Journal of Living Theories, 6(2); 1-11. (pp. 62-77). Retrieved April, 2015 from <http://ejolts.net/node/215>
- Griffin, C. (2012) How can I improve my Practice by Living my Values of Love,
- Trust and Authenticity more fully? Master of Education Project, Brock University. Retrieved 08 September 2014 from <http://www.spanglefish.com/ActionResearchCanada/index.asp?pageid=255602>
- Campbell, E., Clarke, B., Damm, K., Griffin, C., Juniper, M., [Bluewater Action Research Network 2013-14](#). Self-published ebook. Retrieved April 2015.

**Website:** [Bluewater Action Research Network](#), 2013-14, 2014-15

We work in a rural community with a growing population of Mennonite students. At the beginning of the inquiry staff identified many concerns about their practice regarding our high proportion of English Language Learners whose language and culture present unique teaching challenges. By starting with a focus on listening to student voice, a few target students in particular, teachers experienced a gradual shift practice as well as a shift in thinking towards viewing their ELLs as a unique resource which could be used to enrich learning in the classroom. By the end of the project, teachers were able to see themselves in current pedagogical Equally significant to the learning of the collaborative inquiry group was the spread of ideas, viewpoints and teaching strategies throughout the rest of the school.

An experienced English Language Learner (ELL) teacher, this was Avis' first year as a system level collaborative inquiry facilitator. An experienced collaborative inquiry teacher facilitator, this was Cathy's first year in an ELL inquiry. Each of us entered into collaboration willing and eager to learn from the other. Our partnership as co-facilitators and critical friends in researching our own practice as facilitators evolved over the year not only within the school inquiry setting but also as members of a Professional Learning Facilitator Collaborative Inquiry (PLF-CI) facilitated by the Ontario Ministry of Education, as members of a virtual Skype community of action researchers and in voluntary debrief sessions in between meetings.

Values that sustain us and the work we are doing:

Student voice

Language and culture

Authenticity

Trusting and safe culture of inquiry

Inquiry, curiosity