



OTTAWA-CARLETON
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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INTEREST ACADEMY GUIDE



Interest Academy: A vehicle for accessing the curriculum through inquiry-based learning.

A Guide for Educator Teams

Overview

The Interest Academy is a program that will teach and encourage students metacognitive habits of mind, including reflection, project planning, time management, etc through an exploration into Project-Based Learning. Students will self-select a project based on a rich inquiry about an interest or passion of theirs and be given class time to pursue their inquiry.

Student projects will be chosen using the following criteria:

1. **The problem/inquiry/guiding question must be rich and authentic:** If I can find an answer to your question after a 60 second Google search, we need to reframe what your inquiry is asking.
2. **The inquiry must be research based:** a large emphasis on this project is that students will be conducting research in order to answer questions or develop new knowledge and understanding.
3. **The inquiry/project must be teacher approved:** A student will submit a project proposal to their teacher for approval at the outset of their project.
4. **The learning must be shared at the end:** As a part of their project, all students are expected to share their learning to an audience in some way. A plan for sharing is an important part of the project proposal and project planning that a student does throughout the 6 weeks. This sharing is typically done in a whole group manner (e.g. similar to a traditional 'science fair', or to a larger group as a performance).

Throughout the Interest Academy, both in their independent work and the supporting lessons delivered, students will see strong, authentic connections to the Ontario learning skills and our OCDSB Exit Outcomes and how they can be used in their day to day learning and success. With teacher support, students will also come to see how many aspects of their interests and passions as well as working through a passion project can be connected to various expectations in multiple Ontario curricula.

Teachers will find that Interest Academy will help them to differentiate the learning for all students in a classroom and to provide the conditions for them to grow in their thinking and learning in authentic and responsive ways.

Timelines

The Interest Academy is run in three phases: Project Planning, Project Work, and Project Sharing & Reflection. It is expected that the entire project runs over a course of 6 weeks, from introducing the concept and expectations to students to a final 'project sharing day'. These 6 weeks could begin at any time during the school year that is best suited for the individual teacher/school circumstances.

Project Planning

In the Project Planning phase, teachers examine their class and school routines, schedules, and calendars in order to select the best 6 weeks during which the project will run, as well as when work periods and supporting lessons and activities will take place. Teachers will also use this time to select supporting lessons and activities that are both responsive to their learners needs and their curricular goals which at the same time are aligned with each Project week's learning themes (see below).

To prepare for the learning, teachers will also use this time to provide students with interest surveys, multiple intelligence surveys, or other informal assessments that both students and teachers could use to assist with entry into first phases of the project.

Project Work

Week 1: INTRO

Week 1 is all about introducing the project to students including expectations and timelines. Teachers may use books (see Appendix A) or video (Appendix B) to engage, spark interest and inspire curiosity. Teachers may also wish to use an Interest Academy to introduce the concept of "Difference Making" to their students. Looking into the [United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org) (SDGs) - (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org>) can provide individual students, groups of students, or an entire class with a motivation to connect their learning to various issues from a neighbourhood to a global scale. Students will be given the opportunities to complete a project proposal form, brainstorm how their learning might be conducted and shared, as well as develop a draft project planning template. Lesson and activities include asking effective questions and developing a rich inquiry (see Appendix C).

Week 1 Teacher Work	Week 1 Student Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Introduces project (see Appendix A, and the "kickoff slideshow" for an example - http://bit.ly/IA_Kickoff) to studentsDistributes project proposal form (see example - http://bit.ly/IA_Proposal and Appendix C to guide thinking) to studentsSends parent/guardian letter (example - http://bit.ly/IA_ParLetter) home with each studentFacilitates learning that is consistent with the learning goals of the week using self-created or found lessons activities or resources providedIntroduces students to the project portfolio that will be used throughout the project as the main assessment tool (see Assessment, below) and distributes a	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Student selects topic of inquiry/question and works with peers/teacher on creating a rich inquiry question and a plan for learning and sharingStudent completes a project proposal form and submits it to teacher for approval (see example - http://bit.ly/IA_Proposal)Student participates in learning activities delivered by teacher
	Suggested Items to Include in Portfolio <ul style="list-style-type: none">Project Proposal FormInterest Survey or Multiple Intelligence Survey (from project planning phase)Copy of Success Criteria for a successful Interest

<p>hardcopy version (e.g. pocket folder) or an electronic version (e.g. shared folder in Google Drive) of the portfolio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates the co-creation of Success Criteria for a successful Interest Academy Project <p>Week 1 Teacher Resources - http://bit.ly/IA_Wk1</p>	<p>Academy Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mind map, brainstorming (see Week 1 Teacher Resources)
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By the end of week 1:

- ☐ **Students** will have an understanding of the timelines and expectations of the overall project
- ☐ **Students** will have completed a draft project proposal and have submitted it to their teacher for approval
- ☐ **Teacher** will have met with students to approve or guide the project proposal (focus their inquiry)
- ☐ **Teacher** will have facilitated and guided students in the co-creation of **Success Criteria for a successful Interest Academy Project** that will serve to help students assess their own progress and learning
- ☐ **Project Portfolio** distributed to each of the student

Week 2: FOCUS

During week two, supporting lesson and activities will provide students with opportunities to learn about researching and resource gathering (digital, print, human) and how we can make best use of these resources to accomplish our self-selected inquiry tasks. Supporting lessons will include introducing or supporting student understanding of critical thinking and detecting bias when conducting research and consuming media. Students will continue to use scheduled class time to work on researching and (depending on their progress) begin to work on their plan for sharing. Teachers will support and guide students in their independent work via conferencing with individual or groups of students as well as requiring students to complete certain self-assessment tasks and reflective assessments for their portfolio.

During Week 2, a teacher should:

- provide a spark to encourage students to be curious and excited about the topic of inquiry
- strategically model wondering and making predictions
- encourage questions and co-create success criteria for assessing quality of questions being asked
- discuss the difference between question types and how to create a rich inquiry question that connects the topic to a big idea in the curriculum
- introduce learning tasks that build on prior knowledge and engage students in deeper thinking
- encourage/model accountable talk and provide time for student talk
- provide additional information and/or support about the topic for students with limited knowledge or experience

Week 2 Teacher Work	Week 2 Student Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conference and monitoring are essential to guiding and supporting initial stages of project work; refining/adjusting initial plans Return attention to Success Criteria Generated in Week 1. <p>Week 2 Teacher Resources - http://bit.ly/IA_Wk2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student to maintain an ongoing record of work, research, questions, resources (online blog, working document, thoughtbook, journal etc...) Complete first Learning Goal Reflection, students use Success Criteria developed in Week 1 to gauge their overall progress Students participate in learning activities delivered by the teacher
	<p>Suggested Items to Include in Portfolio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A thoughtbook/journal with a record of thoughts, questions, resources, links Evidence of peer feedback and questions surrounding

	topic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photos/video gathered • Learning Goal Reflection and student-created next steps
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By the end of week 2:

- ❑ **Students** will have begun the research process
- ❑ **Students** will have communicated with their teacher about their process, planning and end product/sharing plan
- ❑ **Teacher** will have met with students to support inquiry process, provide resources
- ❑ **Project Portfolio** distributed to each student

Week 3: EXPLORE

In this stage, students gather information from a variety of sources and record their information. There should be an opportunity given to allow students to connect back to their original thinking and questions.

During Week 3, a teacher should:

- Extend student thinking with open ended questions
- Challenge their prior knowledge and beliefs
- Model how to plan, observe and reflect
- Encourage students to share their ideas with each other
- Provide a place for student to post questions
- Provide additional information about the topic for students with limited knowledge/experience
- Provide opportunities for peer and self assessment

Week 3 Teacher Work	Week 3 Student Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher continues to conference with students (individually or in groups) • Teacher provides opportunities for learning about effective use of the Internet for finding information and judging the credibility of their found sources of information • Teacher guides students in generating a list of look fors or criteria that can be used to judge the credibility of websites • Confirms space booking for sharing (week 5) if needed <p><u>Week 3 Teacher Resources</u> - http://bit.ly/IA_Wk3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student continues to research, create, as needed. Some will be at a stage where they are thinking • Student to maintain an ongoing record of work, research, questions, resources (online blog, working document, thoughtbook, journal etc...) • Complete first Learning Goal Reflection, students use Success Criteria developed in Week 1 to gauge their overall progress • Students participate in learning activities delivered by the teacher • Student returns to project timeline and updates as necessary • Learning Goal Reflection and student-created next steps
	<p>Suggested Items to Include in Portfolio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of student selected sources of information that fit criteria generated (either links to websites for e-portfolios or a printed page) • 'Check-in' reflection/journal entry for student to share successes and challenges • Self Assessment sheet and a copy of a peer assessment form completed for another student (name blacked out)

- Updated project plan/timeline including any alterations that were made to reflect current status of learning
- Photos/video gathered
- Journal/Thoughtbook entry

By the end of week 3:

- ❑ **Students** will be close to end of research phase of project
- ❑ Some will have begun the process of first phases of creating a product (e.g. may have started to create their program for a video game or may have started experimenting with a recipe for a dessert at home)
- ❑ Teacher identifies those students who either are struggling to move past the research phase or those whose project plan is untenable or has drastically changed from starting; and determines next steps for them

Week 4: ANALYSE

In this stage, students compare, sort and classify the information to help them answer their questions. They also reflect on the information that they have found and use this to possibly create new questions and hypotheses.

During Week 4, a teacher should:

- Observe, conference and strategically question students to clarify and extend their thinking
- Provide a variety of opportunities for self and peer assessment
- Revisit initial questions and thinking with students
- Strategically model ways to describe patterns, analyze information, and draw conclusions from a variety of sources

Week 4 Teacher Work	Week 4 Student Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that students are aware of their responsibilities for sharing their project in Week 5 • Lead students in learning activity to determine what criteria we can use to decide if a resource was helpful or not (e.g. a website might have had some information but it was hard to find or other parts of the site were too distracting) • Send notice to any and all interested/involved parents and community members that the sharing of learning will take place the following week, inviting all interested parties to participate in the celebration <p>Week 4 Teacher Resources - http://bit.ly/IA_Wk4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student works on using/analyzing their focused information and thinking into an 'answer' to their inquiry. <p>Suggested Items to Include in Portfolio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Goal Reflection and student-created next steps • Using co-constructed criteria, student selects and justifies the best/most helpful resource(s) (digital/print/human/etc) found; and which turned out to be the least helpful. • Photos/video gathered • Journal/Thoughtbook entry

By the end of week 4:

- ❑ **Students** have decided what information from their research "counts" for helping them meet their success criteria and what information can be left aside
- ❑ **Teacher** has confirmed that all resources and spaces in the building have been reserved
- ❑ **Teacher** alerts other staff in the building of the upcoming sharing day as it may cause some disruption to a normal routine, or for other classes to visit/participate.

- ❑ **Teacher** invites parents and other community members to the celebration of learning to happen in the following week (optional)

Week 5: SHARE

In this stage, students celebrate their learning, communicate their findings, present their new understandings in a variety of ways, and reflect on their process and final product. Depending on the scope of projects this 'sharing day' (which ideally might take place in the latter half of the school week) can take many forms. The most familiar would be akin to a traditional 'science fair', where students who have created products (like poster boards, models, a snack from a recipe, etc.) would display their mode of sharing for others who are visiting. This may also include those students who have learned about coding/programming. These students may use a device of some sort to share their learning and product on a screen. Still others may have a performance or more 'formal' presentation to give. If this is the case, teachers should ensure that a space is available to do so. A stage in a gymnasium or auditorium or a larger space in a school's learning commons or multi-purpose room is ideal - especially if the student involves needs space to move. This sharing is an ideal time for other staff, students and classes in the school, as well as parents and community members who have been involved in the learning to visit the school and participate in the celebration of learning.

Alternatively, it may work better that students individually share their learning on an ongoing basis as projects wrap up and the year continues (similar to an in-class presentation. This may allow for more flexibility if a large space is unavailable or if certain students cannot present to a larger group due to anxiety.

If a class has leaned heavily on learning from exploring social justice or environmental issues (e.g. the UN's SDGs) students will also extend their learning and encourage them to take action and facilitate change. The sharing on Week 5 can be used for a class or group of students as a 'call to action', both highlighting their learning on a certain issue as well as their plan for affecting change in the community/nation/world.

During Week 5, a teacher should:

- Facilitate discussions where students can make connections between prior knowledge and new discoveries and evaluate their learning and ways of learning, including self-evaluation
- Challenge and encourage students to extend their new understandings and skills into action
- Celebrate the inquiry experience and recognize differentiated learning strategies used by students throughout the inquiry process

Week 5 Teacher Work	Week 5 Student Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for the celebration of learning by ensuring that any changes from a routine (e.g. class schedules and locations, attendance issues, duty coverage, etc.) are accounted for • Provide students with learning activity that promotes asking effective questions that might deepen understanding or promote further inquiry • Provide students with learning activity that uses project success criteria for giving and receiving effective feedback <p>Week 5 Teacher Resources - http://bit.ly/IA_Wk5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student puts finishing touches on their sharing product or ensures that a performance is prepared • Students work in small groups to predict possible questions an audience may ask about their learning. These questions and their answers can be recorded and used during a students' sharing • Students participate in celebration of sharing and learning by displaying their learning in their chosen format • Students give feedback to the work/project of peer(s) using <p>Suggested Items to Include in Portfolio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Learning Goal Reflections • Copy of the Predicted Questions and Answers worksheet • Photos/video gathered

- Journal/Thoughtbook entry

By the end of week 5:

- ❑ **Students** will have shared their learning from the past 5 weeks
- ❑ **Students** (and **Teacher**) will have participated in observing, questioning, and providing feedback to other students and their sharing products

Week 6: REFLECT

Week 6 Teacher Work	Week 6 Student Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher provides an opportunity for all learners to reflect individually, in pairs/small groups, and as a whole group on the overall project • Teacher reflects on process (if in a team, participates in team reflection) • Conference with each student using the Learning Portfolio to drive the conversation and to anchor it in the process and learning <p>Week 6 Teacher Resources - http://bit.ly/IA_Wk6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student completes final/post project survey or questionnaire • Student participates by providing reflective feedback on learning and experience <p>Suggested Items to Include in Portfolio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Project Reflections • Completed project survey • Final assessment(s) of learning (optional) • Photos/video gathered • Journal/Thoughtbook entry

By the end of week 6:

- ❑ **Students** have reflected on experience as a whole, and have provided feedback to teacher and self
- ❑ **Teacher** meets with each student individually to reflect on process in a student-led manner, with student guiding teacher through their project from proposal to sharing
- ❑ Teacher completes final assessment for projects and shares with each student (optional)

Logistics

Who

<p>In the Classroom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom Teacher/EA • Students • Parents or Community Volunteers & Experts¹ 	<p>In the School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Resource Teacher • Learning Support Teacher • ESL/ELL Lead Teacher • Principal/Vice-Principal • Support staff OA/Custodial (set-up & information distribution) 	<p>In the District</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Leadership from Learning Support Services, Business & Learning Technologies, and Curriculum Services • Instructional Coaches from Curriculum Services
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¹ There is *optional* opportunity for parental and community involvement in this project, please see **[RESOURCE NAME]** for more information

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In school 'experts' like Math Lead Teachers and Digital Lead Learners 	
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The lists above highlight those people directly involved with the project. There may be others impacted at your site in terms of resource and space use in your building. For instance, you may find that you need to reserve and use multiple devices like Chromebooks and iPads for your students to use on project work days. It is strongly encouraged that the classroom teacher books these resources as early as possible to ensure students can learn and create effectively.

How

During the 6 weeks of the project, teachers will select one or two blocks/periods per week to allow students time for research into their chosen inquiry, and for creation of an artifact. Teachers are free to choose when this happens each week, but it is suggested that the same block or period be used each week (e.g. every Thursday after Second Nutrition break or every Friday morning after announcements, etc.). During the 'non-project time' teachers will provide learning opportunities for students to learn crucial elements of project planning and completion. Teachers will be given access to lessons and activities² that they could, for example, use during a language block with their students. These lessons connect with multiple curricular areas and provide authentic ways for students to make connections to their own world.

Where

While it is assumed that the majority of this learning will happen in the classroom, a 'learning anywhere' model may work well for teachers and students working in the Interest Academy. School libraries or learning commons are an excellent examples of spaces where students could pursue their interests and answers to their questions. It is envisioned that, as the inquiry is driven by student led learning, much of the learning and work will also take place at home and possibly in the greater community as well (e.g. public libraries, parks, makerspaces, etc.), which should be encouraged so as to allow for increased parental involvement.

Materials

Access to technology (like Chromebooks and/or iPads) will be crucial to success, especially in the early stages. Teachers of students participating in the Interest Academy are **strongly encouraged to book or reserve appropriate numbers of school-owned devices** for work periods. If spaces outside the classroom are to be used like a learning commons or a multipurpose room, teachers need to reserve these spaces as well.

Human resources are valuable enhancements to this project. Individual experts to address specific interests area helpful, while additional classroom support (LST, EA, LRT, ESL/ELL Lead, Classroom teachers, etc.) guide inquiry and support problem solving as students navigate their learning.

² Teachers are free to use their own resources that they feel would meet the learning goals each week, there are no expectations that they must use resources provided

Literacy, Curriculum, Learning Skills, SDGs & Exit Outcomes

Connections to Literacy³

Participation in the Interest Academy will promote learners to be critical thinkers, effective communicators, collaborative co-learners, and innovative problem solvers.

All students, individually and with others, develop abilities to:

THINK	access, manage, create and evaluate information in order to think imaginatively and critically to solve problems and make decisions, including those related to issues of fairness, equity and social justice
EXPRESS	use language and images in rich and varied forms to read, write, listen, speak, view, represent, discuss and think critically about ideas
REFLECT	apply metacognitive knowledge and skills, develop self-advocacy, a sense of self-efficacy and interest in life-long learning

(Adolescent Literacy Guide p. 8)

These literacy indicators are organized around five components:

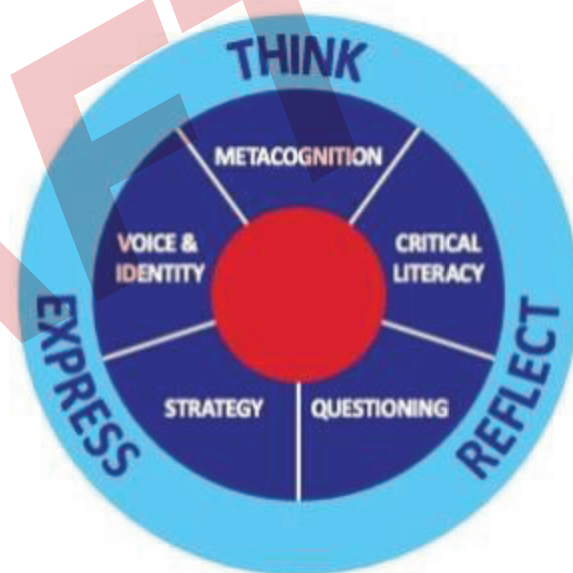
CRITICAL LITERACY refers to students critically analyzing and evaluating the meaning of text as it relates to issues of equity, power, and social justice to inform a critical stance, response and/or action.

METACOGNITION refers to students taking active control over their thinking processes so that they understand themselves as learners, they understand a given task, and they understand a variety of strategies and how to use them in a variety of situations.

QUESTIONING refers to students' curiosity, exploration, and inquiry to evoke, expose and extend their thinking for the purpose of deepening understanding.

STRATEGY refers to students purposefully selecting and using techniques and processes in order to construct and communicate meaning.

VOICE & IDENTITY refers to students' decisions, choices and actions that advocate for their learning and make connections to their experiences, values, culture, and interests.



(Adolescent Literacy Guide p. 9)

³ Adapted from the Adolescent Literacy Guide (2016)

Connections to Ontario Curriculum

Work completed throughout each individual project will allow for instruction and assessment of Overall and Specific Curriculum Expectations. The following are examples of *some* overall expectations that align well with the work students do in a project-based learning experience. Depending on the subject area of students' projects, teachers will find more connections to expectations across a range of curriculum documents.

Grade 4 - 6 Language

- **Oral Communication:** 2. use speaking skills and strategies appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes;
- **Reading:** 1. read and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of literary, graphic, and informational texts, using a range of strategies to construct meaning;
- **Writing:** 1. generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience; 2. draft and revise their writing, using a variety of informational, literary, and graphic forms and stylistic elements appropriate for the purpose and audience; 3. use editing, proofreading, and publishing skills and strategies, and knowledge of language conventions, to correct errors, refine expression, and present their work effectively;
- **Media Literacy:** 1. demonstrate an understanding of a variety of media texts; 2. identify some media forms and explain how the conventions and techniques associated with them are used to create meaning;

Grade 4 - 6 Mathematics

- **Reasoning and Proving:** Students will develop and apply reasoning skills to make and investigate conjectures and construct and defend arguments;
- **Reflecting:** Students will demonstrate that they are reflecting on and monitoring their thinking to help clarify their understanding as they complete an investigation or solve a problem;

Grade 4 - 6 Social Studies

- All Interest Academy projects will support the Social Studies Curriculum document which is designed using the inquiry based model. This model represents a process that students use to investigate events, developments, and issues; solve problems; and reach supportable conclusions (reference pages 23 & 63 for more detail).

Grade 4 - 6 Arts

- Projects will support and apply the creative process (see pages 19-22 of Arts Curriculum Guide) and apply the critical analysis process (see pages 23 - 28 of Arts Curriculum Guide) to varying degrees, regardless of topic as students both progress through their learning and share their final outcomes.

For more information and further examples on how an inquiry-based learning project can connect to the Ontario curriculum, see Appendix B of the [Adolescent Literacy Guide pp. 89-95](#)

Connections to Learning Skills

Interest Academy projects will align seamlessly with the implementation of the new "Transferable Curriculum Learning Skills" to be phased in with the new Ministry report card (Critical Thinking, Innovation & Creativity, Self-Directed Learning, Collaboration, Communication and Citizenship). Until that time, the Report Card Learning Skills and Work Habits connect perfectly to all projects as Learning Skills are not subject or topic specific and are identifiable within these projects regardless of topic and process.

For more information and examples of how an inquiry-based learning project can connect to Learning Skills and Work Habits, see [Appendix C of the Adolescent Literacy Guide pp. 96-99](#)

Connections to Sustainable Development Goals

A strong connection to the United Nations' [Sustainable Development Goals](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org) (SDGs)

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org> can easily be made to be a part of students' inquiry projects in the Interest Academy. If a teacher is interested in encouraging learners to pursue these ideas, a lens of 'difference making' can be placed over student work. For example, criteria along the lines of '*I can explain how my Interest Academy work helps make the world a better place?*' can be added to a list of Success Criteria. A teacher may guide a class to thinking that their inquiry should fall under at least one of the seventeen SDGs. This teaching and learning can be woven into lessons and activities that are addressed in the six weeks of the project.

Connections to OCDSB Exit Outcomes

Once students have begun their inquiry projects, the benefits and relevance to the [OCDSB Exit Outcomes](http://bit.ly/ExitOutcomes) (<http://bit.ly/ExitOutcomes>) will become immediately apparent. Throughout the six weeks, regardless of project, students will organically demonstrate Innovation & Creativity; Collaborate with peers, adults and teachers; exhibit Global Awareness; develop Digital Fluency and, most profoundly, demonstrate Critical Thinking Skills.

UDL & Differentiation

Interest Academy lends itself readily towards the Universal Design for Learning. At its core, Interest Academy allows for educators to respond effectively to the strengths and needs of all students. It mirrors tenets in UDL giving teachers with opportunities for planning instruction and designing learning environments for a diverse group of students. Since the learning done in Interest Academy is driven by student passions and interests, it is inherently differentiated for these learners. Teachers are encouraged to use information gathered from assessments like student interest surveys and learner profiles as they organize and plan for differentiated learning opportunities during Interest Academy learning. In effect, participation in Interest Academy work ensures adherence to the Differentiated Instruction Commitment:

- Using assessment, including student voice, to learn about students' readiness, interests and learning preferences
- Using this information to differentiate the learning environment, instruction, and assessment and evaluation
- Selecting from a varied repertoire of strategies to meet the particular needs of students
- Adjusting plans 'in the moment' to respond to unanticipated strengths and needs surfacing from assessment

Knowing and Responding to Learners: A differentiated instruction educator's guide (2016) p.11

Assessment

Once students have established and understood the success criteria for this project, teachers will want to discuss and establish the difference between grading and assessing these projects. There are multiple opportunities to gather data and evidence to inform the report card. Throughout the process teachers can collect and observe anecdotal information regarding problem solving, collaboration, organization. Teachers are encouraged to use the Digital or Physical Portfolio as evidence of assessment. See Appendix D for examples.

Community Connections

Given the spread of potential interests and inquiries held by students of any age, it is predicted that the opportunities for and areas of learning will stray outside of the content knowledge area of a classroom teacher. Also, if a student or class

decides to use a social justice issue or a SDG as a guide for their inquiry, there may be organizations or groups in a community that may be either a source of information or a collaborator. Given these points, community and parental involvement can play a large role in the learning and sharing in an Interest Academy Project.

Project-based learning opportunities like Interest Academy are fantastic means to increase parent and community involvement in a school in a truly authentic way. Rather than finding smaller, individual strategies to engage parents and community partners in a school in a piecemeal way, a project like this provides an opportunity to use student learning, school identity, curriculum, and instruction, as the leverage to have community members and parents present throughout the process, either as an active partner in the learning, as an important part of the audience, or both.

Teachers are encouraged to seek input, guidance, and expertise from the school community at large by informing and inviting partners and parents to be a part of this learning process. These experts can assist with in class learning and creative work or act as a virtual consultant if schedules permit.

Interest Academy can often allow for ways for the products students create and their learning to be culturally responsive. School and community culture can be woven into the project so that parents see what it is that is valued in the work students are doing.

Student Expectations

Learning Goals

The main learning goal for an undertaking in a project like Interest Academy is for students to gain insight into what is meant when teachers and parents mean when they say “21st Century Learning Outcomes” or “Learning Skills” or “Exit Outcomes”. Working through this inquiry, students will be exposed to authentic ways of exploring how various curricular expectations can impact learning (e.g. asking rich questions, writing for an intended audience, etc.) and how this learning and work towards completing a project will not only lead to future academic success, but also success outside of school life as well.

Success Criteria

The following table⁴ outlines the ‘look fors’ for a successful Interest Academy Learning Project. These may serve to be a ‘jumping off point’ for teachers to co-create success criteria for

Key Knowledge, Understanding, & Success Skills	Learning is focused on teaching students key knowledge and understanding derived from both curricular expectations and Learning Skills, as well as the OCDSB Exit Outcome skills and characteristics
Challenging Problem or Question	Learning is based on a meaningful problem to solve or a question to answer, at the appropriate level of challenge for students, which is operationalized by an open-ended, engaging inquiry question.
Sustained Inquiry	Learning involves an active, student-driven, in-depth process over time, in which students generate questions, find and use resources, ask further questions, and develop their own answers.

⁴ Adapted from Essential Project Design Elements Checklist by www.bie.org

Authenticity	Learning has a real-world context, uses real-world processes, tools, and quality standards, makes a real impact, and/or is connected to students' own concerns, interests, and identities.
Student Voice & Choice	Learning allows students to make some choices about the products they create, how they work, and how they use their time, guided by the teacher and depending on their age and PBL experience
Reflection	Learning provides opportunities for students to reflect on what and how they are learning, and on the project's design and implementation.
Critique & Revision	Learning includes processes for students to give (self, peer) and receive (peer, adult) feedback on their work, in order to revise their ideas and products or conduct further inquiry.
Public Product	The project requires students to demonstrate what they learn by creating a product that is presented or offered to people beyond the classroom.

DRAFT

Appendices

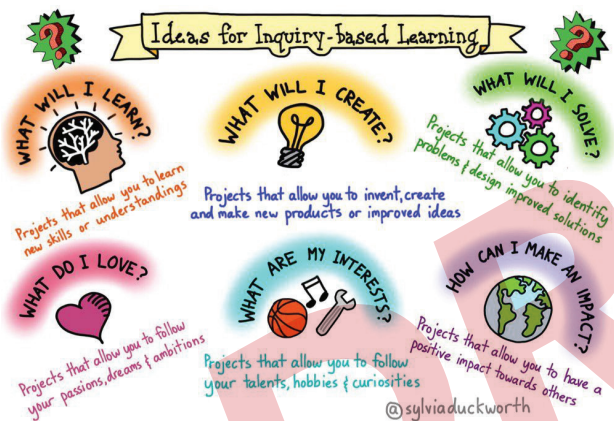
Appendix A: Print Resources

- Children's Books resources:
 - The Most Magnificent Thing by Ashley Spires
 - Rosie Revere Engineer by Andrea Beaty
 - Iggy Peck Architect by Andrea Beaty
 - It's Ok to Make Mistakes by Todd Parr
 - Q is for Question: An ABC Book of Philosophy
 - Ingenious Jean by Susan Chandler & Kate Leake

Appendix B: Video Links

- [Kid President - How to be an Inventor](https://youtu.be/75okexRzWMk) - <https://youtu.be/75okexRzWMk>
- [What IS Genius Hour?](https://youtu.be/NMFQUtHsWhc) - <https://youtu.be/NMFQUtHsWhc>
- [Caine's Arcade](https://youtu.be/falFNkdq96U) - <https://youtu.be/falFNkdq96U>
- [US Teen Invents Cancer Test using Google](http://www.bbc.com/news/av/embed/p00xm7rs/19291258) - <http://www.bbc.com/news/av/embed/p00xm7rs/19291258>

Appendix C: Supporting Images/Documents for Students



Appendix D: Assessment Examples

[Creativity Rubric](http://bit.ly/IA_CreativityRubric) - http://bit.ly/IA_CreativityRubric

[Check in Reflection](http://bit.ly/IA_Reflection) - http://bit.ly/IA_Reflection

[Final Reflection](http://bit.ly/IA_FinalRef) - http://bit.ly/IA_FinalRef

