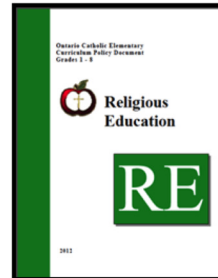


THE ONTARIO CATHOLIC CURRICULUM: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - Grades 1 - 8

MODULE A: An Introduction for Teachers & Administrators



Prepared by Members of the
Faith in Education Council,
Catholic Curriculum Corporation
for
the Institute for Catholic Education
*Special thanks to Sharron McKeever and Les Miller
for their contributions.*



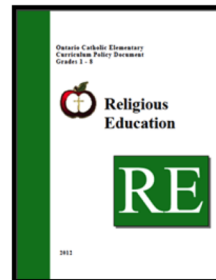
THE ONTARIO CATHOLIC CURRICULUM: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - Grades 1 - 8

An Introduction for Teachers
& Administrators



LEARNING GOAL: To provide an opportunity for participants to become familiar with the new Religious Education (RE) Policy.

- individual or group process
- accompanying placemat
- Interaction, Reflection and Integration



Begin the presentation by reviewing THE LEARNING GOAL: *To provide an opportunity for participants to become familiar with the new RE Policy document. (as shown).*

The presentation is designed to be used by an individual or in a facilitated group. Activities can be modified or amended to fit the time available. An accompanying placemat is available to be used to anchor the learning individually or as a small group.

This presentation will provide opportunities for interaction, reflection, and integration using the policy document. An accompanying placemat is available to anchor the learning individually or in a small group.

If you do not have a copy of the document, it is available for free download from www.iceont.ca and/or www.carfleo.org

Minds On: Introduction to Terms and Concepts



- ❧ *The New Evangelization*
- ❧ *Religious Literacy*
- ❧ *Catechesis*
- ❧ *Religious Education*

1. What do I know already?
2. What questions might I ask?
3. What might I hope to learn?

MINDS ON: If you are reviewing the presentation on your own, take a few moments to activate your prior learning by considering the three questions for each of the listed terms and/or concepts.

If you are reviewing the presentation with a partner or in a group, consider the three questions for each of the listed terms and/or concepts in a brief discussion.

ACTION ITEM:

Use panel A to note your ideas and responses.

New Learning: Guiding Questions

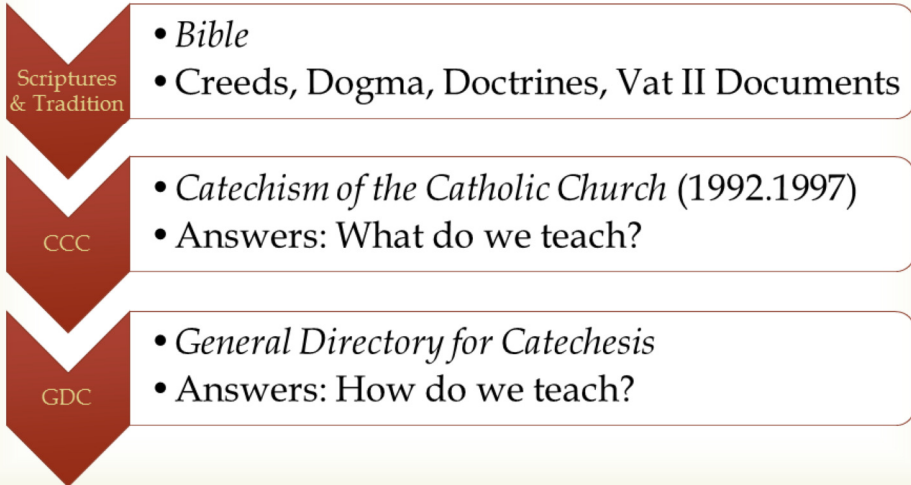


1. What is the authority of the Elementary Religious Education Policy Document?
2. Why create an Elementary Religious Education Policy Document at this time?
3. What is the *New Evangelization*?
4. What are the distinctive features of the Elementary Religious Education Policy Document?
 - i. What is the difference between *catechesis* & *religious education*?
 - ii. What is *religious literacy*?
 - iii. What is the relationship between the *tasks of catechesis* & the *strands of RE*?
 - iv. What are *hope expectations*?
 - v. What is distinct about the methodology of the document?

NEW LEARNING:

The four Guiding Questions will provide you with a framework which will introduce the document and begin to explore its contents and distinctive features. The Guiding Questions appear at the top of the placemat for easy reference.

1. What is the Authority of the Elementary Religious Education Policy Document?



The mission to teach our faith comes from the Gospel mandate to teach the Good News (Matt 28). We answer that call in our schools today. The content of the message comes from scripture and tradition, particularly as expressed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The approaches to religious education and catechesis have been laid out in the General Directory for Catechesis and are rooted in the New Evangelization. Bishops in Ontario (ACBO) collectively set religious education programs through their Education Commission and the Institute for Catholic Education (ICE) and has been forwarded to the Vatican.

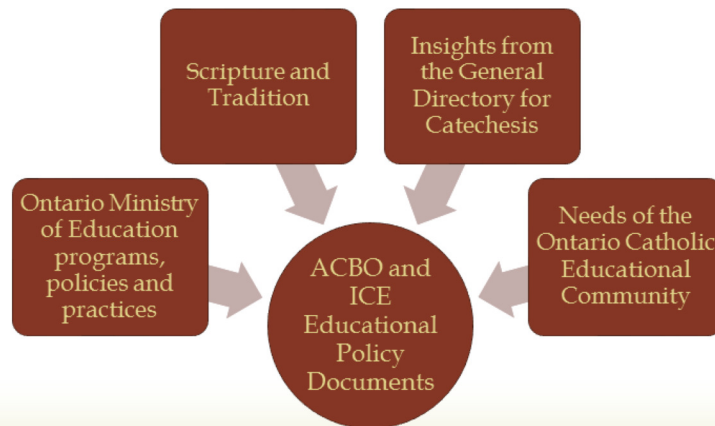
REFLECTION QUESTION OR QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION:

How might teaching and learning in RE differ from teaching and learning in other curriculum areas?

1. What is the authority of the Elementary Religious Education Policy Document?



✠ It is the official policy document for Religious Education



The Ministry of Education agrees to let the Institute for Catholic Education develop curriculum for Family Life and Religious Education.

The Institute for Catholic Education writes curriculum in accord with Ministry of Education course design principles.

Therefore, the ICE curriculum policy documents have the same authority as Ministry of Education policy documents.

Also, the documents include considerations particular to the Ontario Catholic Education community such as our Ontario Catholic Schools Graduate Expectations (OCSGEs).

ACTION ITEM:

Please read page 36, Article 4.1 of the REL Policy Document.

REFLECTION QUESTION OR QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION:

What other considerations, along with the OCSGEs, might be particular to Catholic Schools?

2. Why create the Elementary Religious Education Policy Document at this time?



- ✧ Until now, all other curriculum areas, except RE and Family Life Education (FLE) have had policy documents.
- ✧ RE was directed by programs (i.e. *Born of the Spirit, We are Strong Together*) which are now dated.
- ✧ To support the development of new programs which reflect contemporary insights into RE using current pedagogy, while developing religious literacy.

Not having a policy limits the teacher's ability to direct student learning. Furthermore, the policy document gives authority and credibility to the discipline of Religious Education. It also allows parents to know the curriculum expectations for their children.

OPTIONAL REFLECTION/DISCUSSION QUESTION:

How might a RE policy help you support student learning and achievement?

2. Why create the Elementary Religious Education Policy Document at this time?



✧ The Church has identified that 21st Century learners require a distinctive approach to Religious Education using the approaches of the New Evangelization.

The Church recognizes that we are in a new moment. We can no longer be assured that our students have a rich faith life at home and in their parish community. The Catechetical assumption was that we were building on pre-existing faith life that began in the home and was fed by the Parish. The New Evangelization recognizes that we need to nurture fundamental religious literacy.

REFLECTION QUESTION OR QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION:

What are some of the challenges and opportunities facing us in this new moment?

3. What is the *New Evangelization*?



- ✧ Ardent and courageous proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- ✧ Authentic teaching of the doctrine of the Church
- ✧ Adapted to the needs of the times
- ✧ Promotes enculturation of the faith
- ✧ Responsibility of all Baptized
- ✧ Promotes laws and institutions in harmony with Christ's teachings
- ✧ Evangelizes not only individuals, but cultures, and societies
- ✧ Mission focused on dialogue with other religions and recognition of the Spirit at work within them.

Recall your prior understanding of the *New Evangelization* (from panel A).

John Paul II wrote the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, "The Mission of Christ the Redeemer" in part to describe the new approach and focus of Evangelization that was to be developed and used in the Church's mission to the world. The elements of this New Evangelization are at the heart of Religious Education and Catechesis.

Evangelization refers to the way we spread the Good News in our world today. It continues to be a passionate endeavour that reflects the beauty and truth of Church teaching. It is however adapted the needs of our time being sensitive to the cultural milieu of learners. It has to speak to the hearts of people in ways they can understand. This New Evangelization is the responsibility of all of us who are baptized but Catholic teachers have a special responsibility. It identifies and promotes those elements of our social fabric that are in harmony with Christ's teachings even though they may not be explicitly Christian. The New Evangelization seeks the ongoing growth in love, justice and faith of individuals, cultures and societies. The New Evangelization promotes dialogue between Christians and other faith traditions and recognizes where the Spirit is alive in diverse ways.

*****For a deeper understanding of the "New Evangelization", please refer to Module B in this series of activities.**

ACTION ITEM:

Read pages 2-6 in the RE policy document and respond to the guiding questions found on Panel B.

3. What is the *New Evangelization*?



✧ “Modern *humankind* listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if *one* does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.”

EVANGELII NUNTIANDI #41

REFLECTION QUESTION OR QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION:

Considering the above quotation, what might be the implications of the *New Evangelization* for you as a Catholic Educator on your faith journey?

4. What are the distinctive features of the Elementary RE Policy Document?

(Differences between Catechesis & Religious Education)

Catechesis

- Primarily Parish centered
- Directed at believers
- Context : liturgical celebration
- Focus: Mysteries of Faith
- Deepens understanding of faith
- Strengthens ability to articulate faith



Religious Education

- School centered
- Is to address the needs of all students:
 - Believers
 - Searchers
 - Non-believers
- Primarily a scholastic discipline with curricular expectations
- Engages in interdisciplinary dialogue
- 1st step in evangelization

Catechesis and Religious Education in schools are “distinct yet complementary”.

First, Catechesis. Because Catechesis is an activity for those who have already expressed a belief in God, it takes place primarily in the Parish. It is a preparation for sacramental and liturgical celebration and focuses on the Mysteries of Faith, deepening and strengthening our understanding and articulation of faith.

Now, Religious Education,

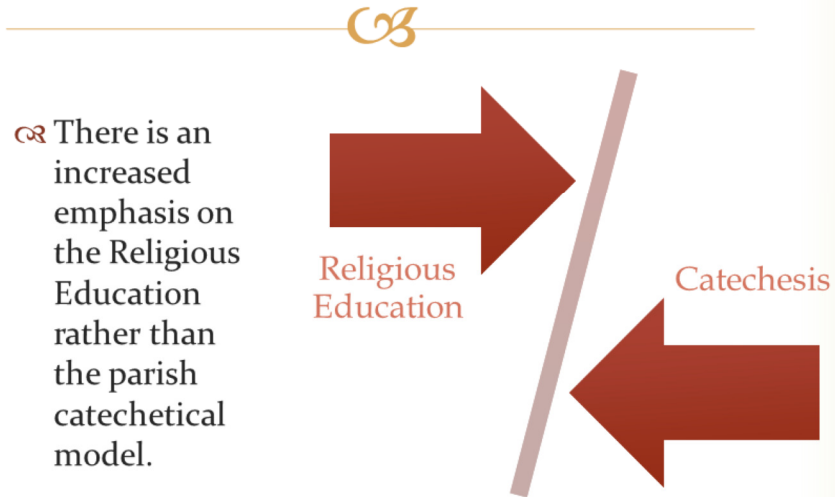
In our school setting we have many students who are not active parishioners. Programming has to reflect this while also addressing the needs of active believers. Religious Education, should be presented with the same rigour and scholastic discipline as all other subjects – focused on knowledge, understanding, communication, application and critical thinking. Religious Education provides a language for interdisciplinary dialogue between Science and Religions, History and Religion, etc. Promoting a knowledge and understanding of the faith is the first step in the process of evangelization – a missionary initiative that comes before catechesis. Therefore, **Religious Education in schools prepares students for catechesis and supports the ongoing process of catechesis. Religious Education also provides opportunities for catechetical moments that link the content of religious education to the practice of faith in the Church and in the world.**

The shift in emphasis to Religious Education does not mean abandonment of catechetical practices. Catholic schools would still offer catechetical activities, especially through participation in the celebration of Mass, Morning prayer, daily celebrations of each liturgical season, and preparation for the sacraments of initiation. Providing opportunities

for students to reflect on the scriptures and church teaching as each might shape and form their lives is a very powerful way to awaken or strengthen a student's relationship with God.

4. What are the distinctive features of the Elementary RE Policy Document?

(Differences between Catechesis & Religious Education)



There is an increased emphasis on the Religious Education rather than the parish catechetical model.

The expectations contained within the Religious Education policy document address the reality of our contemporary Catholic schools which require a Religious Education approach to learning rather than the catechetical approach used in our parishes.

4. What are the distinctive features of the Elementary RE Policy Document?

(Religious Literacy)



- ✧ The signs of the times - students require a deepened religious literacy that includes systematic instruction in the teachings of our faith.
- ✧ It is written to align with Ontario Ministry of Education policy documents and their pedagogical approaches.
- ✧ Religious literacy provides a confidence and a competence in the language and practice of the Faith. This learning is a cognitive skill that is appropriated into the faith journey and relationship with Jesus Christ.

The emphasis in the document is a move to a more academically rigorous curriculum in which the basic tenets of the Christian story and Christian living are well understood.

This policy document is designed to resemble Ministry documents in format, policy considerations, and pedagogy. It uses Overall and Specific Expectations, Strands, Assessment and Evaluation including the achievement charts, accommodations and extra support.

REFLECTION QUESTION OR QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION:

How might religious literacy be demonstrated in student learning and achievement?

4. What are the distinctive features of the Elementary RE Policy Document?

(Tasks of Catechesis)



In the Religious Education policy document we find six strands of learning that are based on the six tasks of catechesis.

These tasks all serve to strengthen our relationship with Jesus who is at the centre of our Catholic Education.

It was recommended that these tasks be translated into educational language so the Six Tasks of Catechesis are rephrased as the Six Strands of the Religious Education Policy Document.

4. What are the distinctive features of the Elementary RE Policy Document?

(Strands of RE)

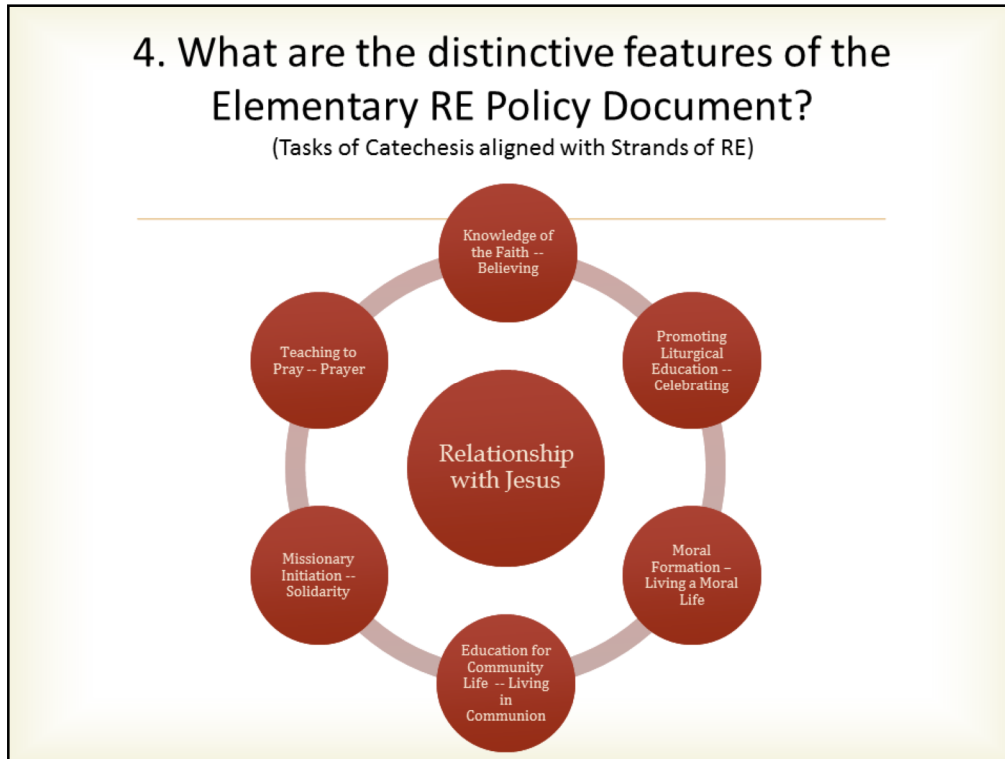


The six strands of the Religious Education Policy will form the framework for developing programs.

These strands are not intended to be discrete units of study, rather “within each strand fundamental concepts are identified and through a spiraling process, are revisited [throughout units within the grade level] and within each year through review, application to new information and/or additional information to increase knowledge, deepen understanding and enhance recall.” (ICE 2012)

4. What are the distinctive features of the Elementary RE Policy Document?

(Tasks of Catechesis aligned with Strands of RE)



ACTION ITEM:

Complete placemat Panel C, the 4A's Protocol while considering the text found on p. 24-34 Article 3.3 - The Strands of RE.

If you are reviewing the presentation on your own, choose one of the six strands to direct the activity. If you are reviewing the presentation with a partner or group, assign the strands accordingly to direct the activity.

4. What are the distinctive features of the Elementary RE Policy Document?

(Hope Expectations)



- ❧ The *Hope Expectations* describe the vision of learning that exists in the affective domain within each strand, addressing catechesis, attitudes, & skills.
- ❧ These include items such as “appreciation for the Catholic tradition,” “moral responsibility,” et al.
- ❧ “*Our Hopes for Students...* remind teachers of the essential importance of RE to the broader process of evangelization.” (ICE, 2012)

Unlike Ministry of Education documents this curriculum includes “Hope Expectations”. These expectations address the catechetical component and the affective domain. They are to be addressed but NOT evaluated. Although the emphasis has shifted towards Religious Education, catechetical opportunities are not neglected.

ACTION ITEM:

Review Article 3.1 on page 23 and consider how evangelization might live in your classroom, beyond the text? Complete placemat Panel D, Brainstorming Web.

4. What are the distinctive features of the Elementary RE Policy Document?

(Hope Expectations)

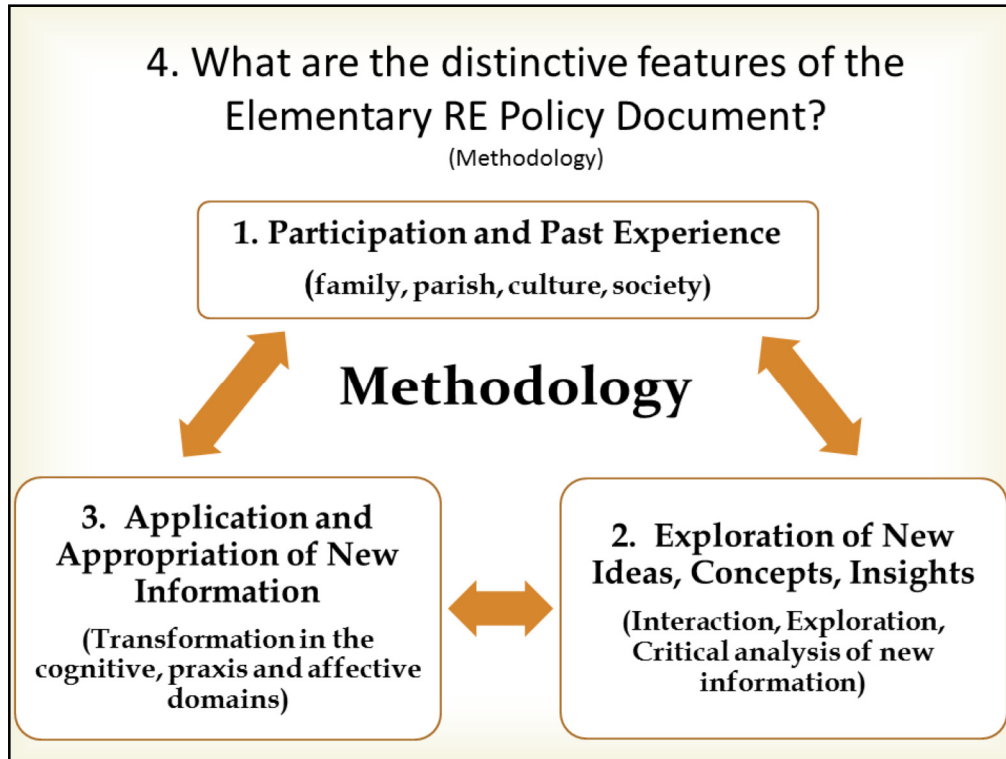


- ❧ The cognitive or overall expectations can be described as the ‘bricks’ or building blocks of learning.
- ❧ The affective or hope expectations can be described as the ‘mortar’ or that which binds the blocks together and gives the structure shape.

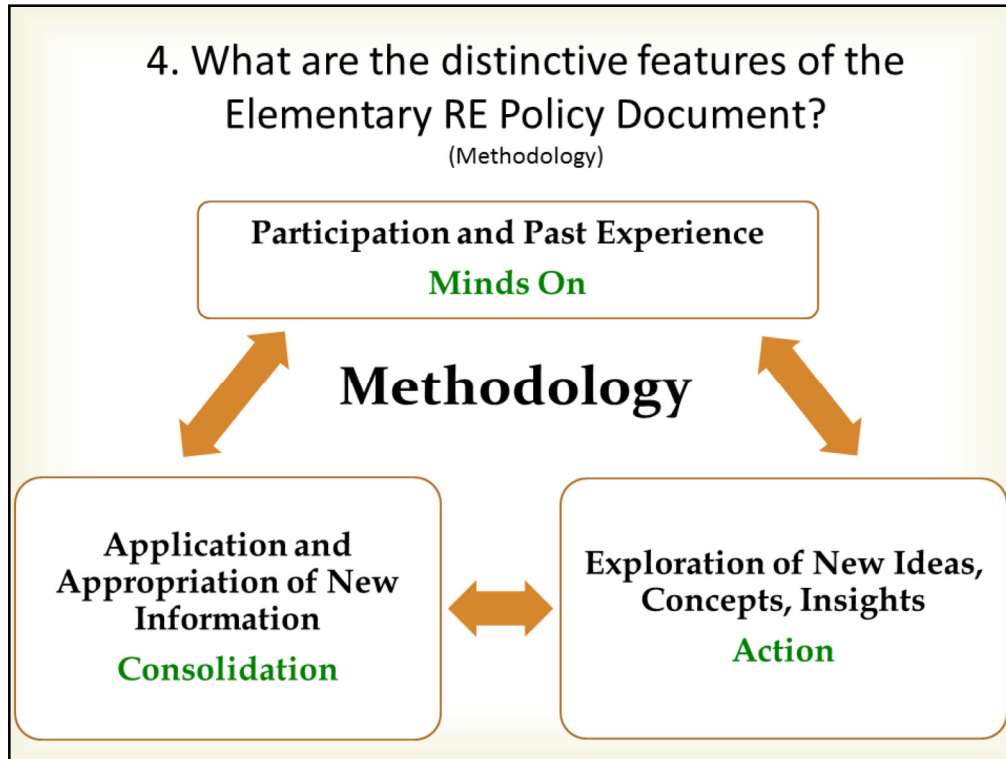
ACTION ITEM:

Review the Hope Expectations found as appropriate to the division in which you teach, on pages 62 (primary), 105-106 (junior), and/or 154-155 (intermediate).

Complete placemat Panel E Hope Expectations in the fishbone organizer, briefly describing how the hope expectations for each strand might be demonstrated in your classroom.



After long discussions regarding the methodology that would best support learning and promote the intended attitudes and values, consensus was reached to keep the method found in the Born of the Spirit Series with which teachers are familiar. This method incorporates 3 elements: Participation and Past Experience; Exploration of New Ideas and Concepts; Application and Appropriation of new Information. Notice the resemblance between this approach and the three part lesson advocated by the Ministry of Education. Note, however, that this model is dynamic. For example, it allows teachers to conduct reflection activities anywhere they see fit within the lesson.



The three phases of the methodology may align well with the three part lesson plan.

ACTION ITEM:

Review pages 17-22. Select an overall expectation from a grade with which you are familiar and anticipating the development of a three-part lesson plan, what aspects of the components might you consider? Note any key ideas or concepts on the placemat Panel F, Methodology p. 17-22.

What questions, concerns, or comments might you have?



21