

SETTLEMENT WORKERS IN SCHOOLS

NEWCOMER ORIENTATION WEEK

YEAR II ROLL OUT

EVALUATION REPORT

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Kappel Ramji Consulting Group is a firm specializing in community based program planning and development, evaluation, organizational reviews, strategic planning, training and anti-racist organizational change. Most assignments are related to the development of strategies for organizations to increase their responsiveness to their community's needs, thereby improving access to services for vulnerable individuals and people experiencing barriers.

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1. Introduction

Following the successful 2007 pilot of Newcomer Orientation Week (NOW) - a one week initiative to prepare newly arrived youth for entry to high schools in Ontario – Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) rolled out the initiative to 40 schools in Ontario in the summer of 2008. The NOW program was delivered through thirteen (13) organisations with the goal to:

Give newcomer youth a head start in their new school by familiarising them with the school building and routines, linking them to students already attending the school, and orienting them to sources of help as well as the “culture” of the Ontario educational system.

While there was a detailed evaluation of the pilot to determine its strengths and the conditions for success, the evaluation of the roll out was broader and more streamlined. Its main purpose was to answer two (2) key questions:

- Are there any major issues related to the expansion and decentralisation of the initiative from the point of view of the NOW teams- the Settlement Workers, Teachers and Peer Leaders?
- What are the key management issues that might need further consideration for future success and possible continued expansion of NOW?

This is the final evaluation report of the NOW Roll out in Year II.

2. Background of the Roll Out

In implementing NOW throughout the province, the following key features are important to note:

- The peer based NOW model, a partnership between educators, settlement workers and trained peer leaders was retained.
- The timing, duration and curriculum of NOW remained essentially the same as in the pilot.
- The overall responsibility for the delivery of NOW remained with those agencies which deliver the Settlement Worker in the Schools program (SWIS)
- The coordination of the delivery of NOW was decentralised except for the training and the refinement of the activities. While in the pilot year the SWIS Provincial Coordinator played a central role in the initiative, in 2008, the budgets and all delivery responsibilities except for the training aspect were devolved to the thirteen (13) sponsoring agencies. To assist the agencies with assuming this management role, the Provincial Coordinator provided guidelines, templates, prototypes etc that could expedite budgeting, promotional material development, etc.

- The training for the Peer Leaders (PLs) and Settlement Workers (SWs) was managed centrally and the Provincial Coordinator was also available to the sites for support, troubleshooting and advice.¹

Table 1: Agencies Sponsoring NOW and the NOW High School Locations, August 2008

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ New Canadians' Centre of Excellence Inc., Windsor
[High Schools: Forster, Catholic Central] □ Kitchener-Waterloo YMCA
[High Schools: St. Mary's, Forest Heights] □ SISO Hamilton
[High Schools: McNab, Cathedral, Barton, Glendale, Sir John] □ Brampton Multicultural Community Centre²
[High Schools: Central Peel, St. Edmund Campion, Bramalea] □ Inter-Cultural Neighbourhood Social Services, Mississauga
[High Schools: Glenforest, Lincoln, Fr. M. Goetz, T.L. Kennedy, Port Credit] □ Catholic Community Services of York Region
[High Schools: St. Elizabeth, Milliken Mills] □ Ottawa CISO
[High Schools: Glebe] □ Jewish Family and Child, Toronto
[High Schools: Northview, Newtonbrook] □ North York Community House, Toronto
[High Schools: NACI, Downsview, CW Jeffreys] □ Culturelink, Toronto
[High Schools: Central Tech, Central Commerce, St. Mary's] □ Centre for Information & Community Services, Toronto
[High Schools: Georges Vanier, George S. Henry, Earl Haig, A.Y. Jackson & Victoria Park] □ Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office, Toronto
[High Schools: Marc Garneau, Monarch Park, Greenwood] □ Catholic Cross Cultural, Toronto
[High Schools: Jean Vanier, Norman Bethune, Churchill, Campbell] |
|---|

3. Evaluation Method

Since the NOW pilot in 2007 affirmed that the concept and model were right on track, the evaluation of the roll out this year was a brief process.

¹ For details of the NOW model please see the *Newcomer Orientation Week Pilot Initiative Evaluation Report*, Kappel Ramji Consulting Group, November 27, 2007.

² The contract for the delivery of NOW in Mississauga was granted by CIC to the Peel District School Board to work in partnership with Inter-cultural Neighbourhood Social Services and Brampton Multicultural Community Centre.

3.1. Evaluation Strategies and Tools

There were two (2) tools developed for the evaluation- a self-administered web-based survey for team members and an interview guide for managers.

A survey tool was developed for the three (3) key NOW Team member groups - Peer Leaders, Settlement Workers and Teachers. This allowed for comparison of perceptions and views between the three groups about the same things. In selecting the standard measures to track, consideration was given to the need for a tool that was brief, to the point and could be filled in easily. At the same time the measures needed to be significant enough that they give valuable feedback to stakeholders.

The survey tool was developed with input from SWIS Coordinators to ensure that they would find the information that was gathered useful for adjusting their program. See Appendix 1 for the Survey tool.

The second aspect of the evaluation was interviews with a sample of managers of NOW (most often SWIS Coordinators) and the Provincial Coordinator. Again, the questions were brief and could be used in the future by managers who wished to think through the management/operational issues that had emerged. The sample of managers was picked randomly to include four (4) agencies that had been part of the NOW pilot process and were expanding the program to more schools this year and three (3) new agencies that were running the initiative for the first time. This would allow for a deeper understanding of the sorts of management issues that might need to be considered in future years. The interviews were conducted via the telephone with representatives of:

See Appendix 2 for the Management Interview Guide and names of participants.

3.2. Stakeholder Participation

In all, the views and feedback of 517 NOW Team members (Peer Leaders, Settlement Workers and Teachers) and nine (9) SWIS Coordinators or agency representatives - or a total of 526 individuals gave input to this process. Table 2 highlights the overall participation rates in the evaluation process by the sponsoring agency.

Table 2: Stakeholder Participation in the NOW Evaluation

	Telephone Interview	Web Based Survey			
	NOW Mgrs/Coord.	Peer Leaders	Teachers	Settlement Workers	Total
New Canadians' Centre of Excellence Inc., Windsor	1	6	1	4	12
Kitchener-Waterloo YMCA		10	0	6	16
SISO Hamilton	1	27	6	7	41
Brampton Multicultural Community Centre		30	6	12	48
Inter-Cultural Neighbourhood Social Services, Mississauga	2	26	6	10	44
Catholic Community Services of York Region	1	25	2	7	35
Ottawa CISO	1	0	1	1	3
Jewish Family and Child, Toronto 7		21	4	12	37
North York Community House, Toronto 6	1	23	7	13	44
Culturelink, Toronto 5		10	7	11	28
Centre for Information & Community Services, Toronto 3		45	9	13	67
Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office, Toronto 2		31	6	10	47
Catholic Cross Cultural, Toronto 1	2	56	3	13	74
No Agency identified		6		2	8
No Role or Agency Identified					22
Totals	9	316	58	121	526

3.3. Limitations of the Method

The following are the limitations to the method that warrant mentioning.

- In spite of testing the survey prototype, when it was initially released there was a problem that prevented some people from filling in the survey. Quick action rectified the issue and the agency that reported the problem was very resourceful in finding a way to provide the necessary information in spite of the technical glitch.
- While it was anticipated that all the NOW team members would be able to provide input to the survey on line, this did not turn out to be the case. About 15% (80) of the responses were provided on paper and had to subsequently be entered into the database.
- There are some agencies with low response rates in spite of repeated requests and reminders about the importance of participating and the extension of deadlines. However, there are ~ 30 surveys (5.5%) that have no agency and/or role noted for the respondent - and some of these could be from those agencies with low response rates.
- Not all managers had an opportunity to give input to the process since resources limited us to a random sample.

While these limitations exist, the overall response rate on the survey and depth of understanding from the sample of managers to give us confidence in our analysis of the findings.

4.0 Evaluation Findings

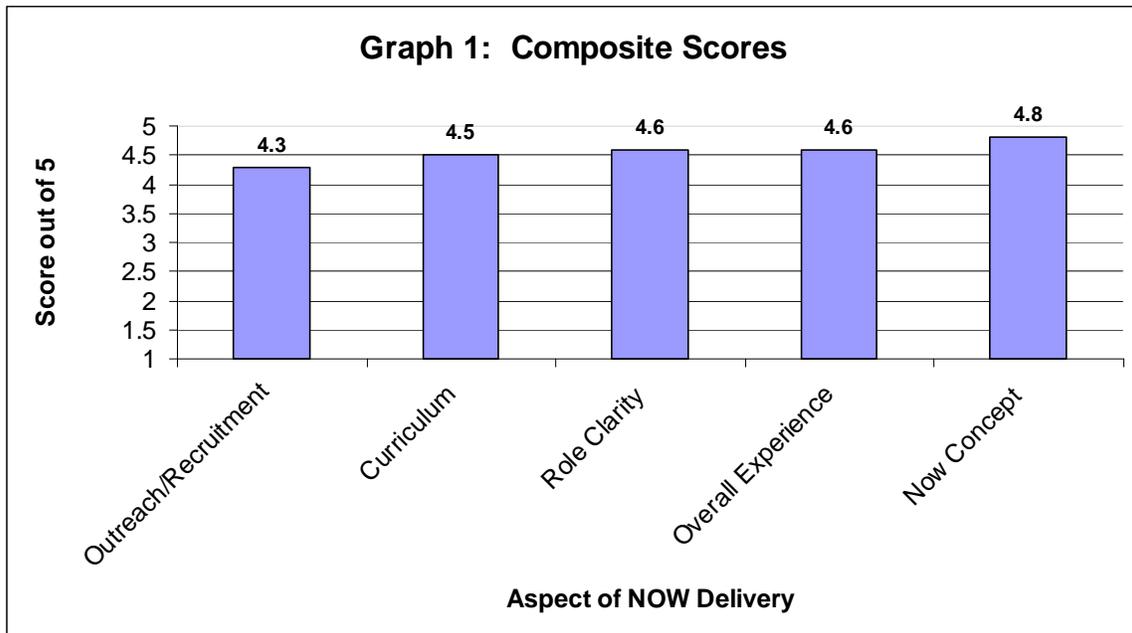
The two tools generated detailed data from all stakeholder groups. All of the data has been analysed and findings and recommendations in this report are presented for the NOW initiative as a whole or for the whole Province. Individual agencies will have access to data about their specific initiative(s) for their own use.

The data is presented according to the broad areas in the survey tool:

- NOW Experience Overall
- Outreach and Recruitment of Students for NOW
- NOW Curriculum
- Peer Leader, Settlement Worker and Teacher Roles
- NOW Concept

4.1. *NOW Experience Overall*

As with the pilot, the overall NOW roll out was a resounding success. All of the data supports this. The scores on the survey were all quite high and there was very little variation in the scoring between the three stakeholder groups- PLs, Settlement workers and teachers. Graph 1 highlights this.



Graph 2 shows some minor variation in scoring between the three team member groups – which in the overall scheme of things, is insignificant. That is, there is broad consensus among team members that NOW worked well.

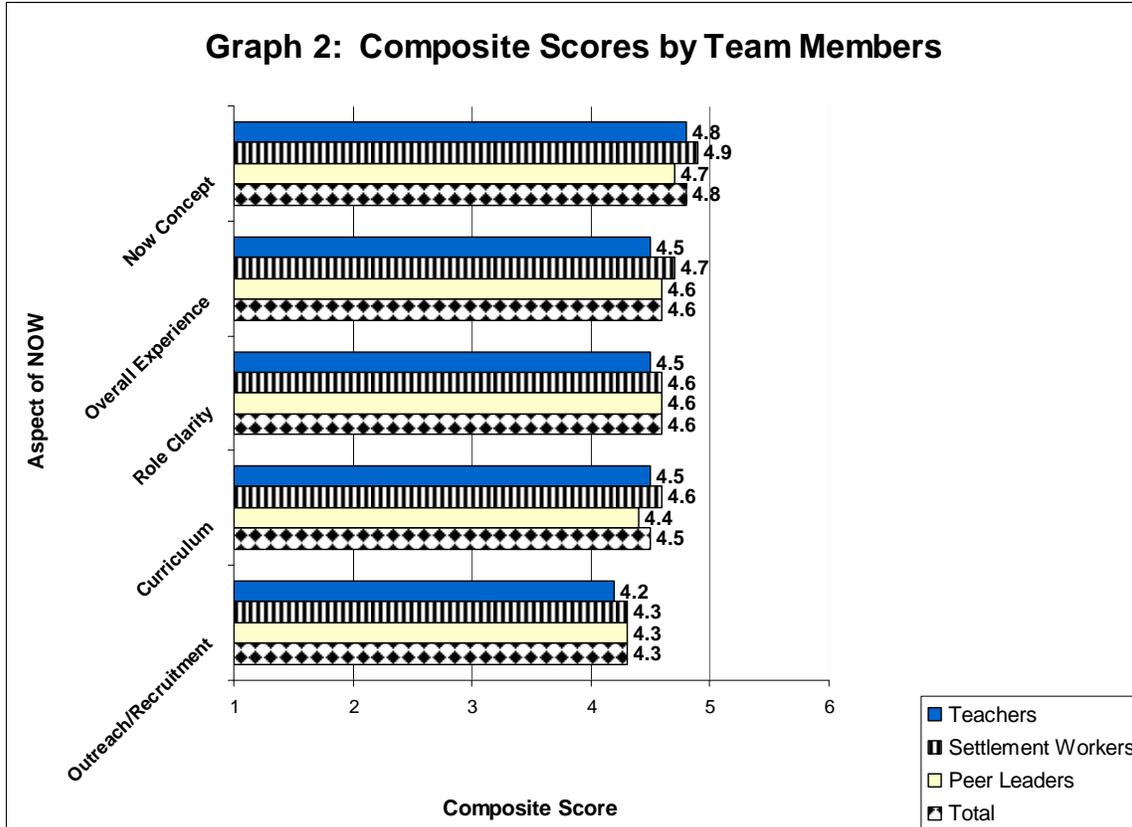


Table 3 gives the details of the scoring of each measure that makes up the composite score for the overall experience. Again, the detailed scores are all high.

Table 3: Overall Experience of NOW Week - Detailed Scores

Standard Measures	Totally agree	Neutral	Totally dis-agree	Rating Avg	
1. The four (4) day NOW week went smoothly	336	86	25	3	4.66
2. All the newcomer youth were able to communicate with at least one member of the NOW team in their first language	313	87	29	13	4.54
3. There were sufficient numbers of PLs, Settlement Workers and Teachers available to support the program	373	49	16	5	4.76
4. Relations with the school were smooth, supportive and cooperative	346	73	16	7	4.69
5. School registration of NOW participants went smoothly on the first day and they were able to start the program quickly	292	93	38	12	4.46

Following is more detail about those areas of the overall operations that got the attention of managers and stakeholders.

4.1.1 Relations with the School

- While most perceive that relations with the schools were smooth, there were a few issues in some sites with caretaking. Some concerns related to the specific tasks that the caretaking department has to accomplish the week before the opening of school which might bring them into conflict with the space needs and /or timing of NOW. In other instances there were issues about the hanging of the banner.
- Everyone agrees that starting the development of NOW early and building positive relations with various departments of the school/district throughout the year greatly enhances the likelihood of positive commitment and support from that part of the school infrastructure.
- Principals and/or Vice principals were universally supportive of NOW. While they happily participated in opening and closing activities, some would have appreciated more notice about the timing of their part in the process.
- One School Administrator who was sponsoring NOW for the first time told a Coordinator: *“A lot of agencies come into our school to deliver programs. NOW was professionally managed with all the right components. This is the best to date.”*

4.1.2 Registration

- Registration continues to be an issue that requires specific and detailed planning in each site where NOW will be offered. Some of the ways that schools handled registration for NOW students this year include:
 - Running NOW from Tuesday through Friday of the last week of August so all NOW participants could be registered on the Monday
 - Registering NOW students in a block so that there would be less disruption to the NOW curriculum
 - Registering NOW students continuously so that the NOW program could continue to move forward according to the schedule.
- For some schools there is an issue with the Settlement Workers involvement in NOW making them unavailable to assist with the registration of non-NOW students that may need settlement support and/or interpretation.
- Other programs overlapped with NOW such as Grade 9 orientation programs which are also held in the last week of August. For NOW students entering

Grade 9 this presents a conundrum since it is hard to participate in both programs.

- These issues cause some people to wonder whether NOW could be offered any earlier in August. Those who raise this question also note that the last week in August is a very stressful week for schools in general and NOW adds to that busy-ness.

4.1.3 Communication of Students with NOW Team Members

- There are indications that while most newcomer students attending NOW could communicate with at least one person on the Team in their first language, there were still some students who were floundering because there was no one on the team who could communicate with them.

4.2. Outreach/Recruitment of Students for NOW

The outreach/recruitment aspect of NOW seems to be the area that may require the most continued work or improvement in future years. While the scores are still high, 5 of the 6 standards score in the lowest range. As well, this is the section where the only composite score under 4.0. was recorded. On a scale of 1 - 5 teachers gave Standard 5 about school office recruitment a 3.7.

Table 4 gives more detail about the scoring of measures in this area.

Table 4: Outreach & Recruitment of Students for NOW - Detailed Scores

Standard Measures	Totally agree		Neutral		Totally dis-agree	Rating Avg
1. NOW reached the right students – that is, new arrivals who have not been to high school in Canada before	369	95	23	8	1	4.66
2. The banner on the school building was a good way to reach students for NOW	249	120	88	17	10	4.20
3. Posters and NOW cards were effective promotional tools	262	126	72	14	7	4.29
4. The school board assessment centres promoted NOW effectively	275	113	76	12	5	4.33
5. In June, The school office staff promoted NOW effectively when new arrivals enrolled for school	241	122	85	20	11	4.17
6. Youth from all of the newcomer groups within our school's boundaries participated in NOW	240	141	87	17	11	4.17

- Sponsoring agencies used a variety of methods to recruit students they anticipated could benefit from NOW. In addition to the methods listed in the standards, others included:
 - Ads in ethnic media- print and radio
 - Using customised multilingual flyers
 - Posters in local businesses such as grocery stores and beauty salons and libraries and other public spaces.
 - Written communication and/or visits to Grade 8 feeder schools

- Distribution of material through PLs
 - Distribution of material in buildings through Canada Post
 - Follow up phone calls in late August to remind families about NOW.
- Most agree that the best strategy is a multi faceted one - one that uses many different methods at one time. Many also agree that word of mouth and starting early before summer vacation are both key.
 - There continue to be concerns that the banner is costly and does not work well in all settings. Schools that are set back from the road and are not visible to passers-by are not considered good candidates for banners.
 - Having said this, there are also indications that School Principals like the banner because of the way it portrays their school- as one that is working hard to welcome and include newcomer youth.
 - There are some concerns about the cost of the promotional materials and possible wastage. Some managers would also prefer more latitude about how to develop materials so they can be used over several years with the addition of new information via peel off labels.
 - Finally, there continue to be issues with some assessment centres that are closed in July and have backlogs of newcomer youth to assess, preventing some from attending NOW. Some schools have addressed this by being more flexible and registering youth for NOW who are destined for the school but may not have completed their assessment.

4.3. NOW Curriculum

At the heart of NOW is a strong curriculum. Table 5 shows the scoring.

Table 5: NOW Curriculum - Detailed Scores

Standard Measures	Totally agree				Neutral		Totally dis-agree	Rating Avg
1. The NOW curriculum met the school orientation needs of the students who attended the program	331	106	19	3	3		4.64	
2. There were no obvious gaps in the NOW activities	209	160	66	19	12		4.15	
3. The activities were easy to use and adapt as needed	321	98	36	4	2		4.59	
4. There were sufficient numbers & types of activities to keep students engaged	275	118	44	22	8		4.35	
5. Newcomer students seemed very satisfied with their experience this week	339	93	26	4	4		4.63	

- Two measures were in the under 4.5 group as noted above. What has emerged is that there are some students who attend NOW who have been

attending school in Canada already - since last January. Most of these would have been students from Grade 8 feeder schools. For these students there are concerns about boredom with the NOW program. There also seem to be some sense that younger students – e.g. those entering Grade 9 and 10 – prefer a high level of activity as opposed to the older students. When newcomer students are fluent in English, they appear to get through the current curriculum faster. For this reason, it may be important to have additional or more involved activities in the NOW curriculum.

- In anticipation of these variations in needs, this year’s NOW curriculum activities were all enhanced with suggestions about how to extend the activity or give it more depth for those students who caught on quickly. For those students who required a slower pace, there were also additional suggestions about accommodations that could be made.
- Some of the potential future enhancements to the curriculum that have been noted include:
 - Make the first day more active
 - Incorporate more drama/theatre strategies into the activities
- The impact of NOW on newcomer youth was not part of this evaluation. However, there is one story that emerged that is telling. One sponsoring agency, directly after NOW, hosted an orientation session on a weekend for all incoming newcomer youth and their families within their region. SWs noted that those newcomer youth who had attended NOW were already showing leadership at this meeting!

4.4. NOW Team Roles

This area of the NOW process shows consistently high marks as seen in Table 6.

Table 6: Peer Leader, Settlement Worker and Teacher Roles - Detailed Scores

Standard Measures	Totally agree		Neutral		Totally dis-agree	Rating Avg
1. The NOW team of Peer Leaders, Settlement Workers and Teachers worked well together	374	62	17	2	4	4.74
2. All the NOW team members were clear about their roles and responsibilities during the week	304	108	29	7	3	4.56
3. All the NOW team members were well trained/prepared for their roles	313	104	28	3	2	4.61
4. There was effective communication between the various members of the NOW team	298	108	28	10	4	4.53
5. Decisions were made by the right people in a thoughtful, collaborative and timely manner	306	99	32	11	2	4.55
6. Team members felt supported by their colleagues (at the school	327	87	26	8	5	4.60

or agency) as they fulfilled their roles in NOW						
7. There was no role overlap evident between the various members of the NOW team	273	103	49	15	11	4.36

4.4.1 Peer Leader Recruitment

- Recruitment processes of PLs for NOW seem to have been diversified this year. Many used a more formal approach that included applications, interviews, and letters for all applicants with the results. At least one site used a group interview process. Some had an information session for all applicants before the interviews. Another passed out the questions that would be asked so all students had an equal chance in the interview, not only did these strategies make the recruitment of PLs more transparent, respectful and fair, it also gave SWs some experience in a new management skill.
- Sites that re-hired PLs that had participated last year noted that while they behaved as “pros” in the program, they exhibited less excitement overall. This has led them to conclude that in ensuing years they will keep the number of “old timers” to a minimum.
- There appear to have been different PL: Student ratios in the various NOW sites. At least two (2) SPOs were able to hire more PLs that then had implications for the training aspect of the roll out.

4.4.2 Peer Leader Training

- While the training of PLs and SWs was managed centrally, because of the growth of the initiative, there were many more trainers in the field working with PL and SW teams to prepare them for their roles. While the training team in the pilot phase had four (4) members, this year there were twenty-four (24) trainers. This meant that the skills and capacities of the training team were broader and more diverse. It also meant that the recruitment process was time consuming and relied heavily on information from local sites about the numbers of PLs they intended to recruit for the training – leading to some last minute hiring to accommodate those sites that delayed planning and/or those people who dropped out of the trainer pool.
- All 24 trainers were oriented and trained centrally at a one-day event facilitated by a lead trainer and the Provincial Coordinator and then deployed to their respective communities. SWs were not part of this training event so collegial relationships between the two groups who would later train PLs could not be fostered. As well there could not be any real informed negotiation about which roles if any the SW might like to take in the PL training sessions.

- It does not appear that the trainers walked through each specific activity in the NOW curriculum that they would be teaching PLs. There was an assumption that this aspect of the expectations was self-evident.
- Overall most are satisfied with the training that PLs received and their subsequent performance. However, there were a few issues worth noting:
 - Some trainers were “too slow” and were not able to complete the agenda so some felt that more time was required for the training.
 - There were tensions in some training session between SWs and the trainer, which put the PLs in an awkward position. This seems to be related to lack of clarity about roles as well as lack of information//knowledge on the part of trainers who may not have themselves participated in a NOW session before.
 - Some trainers also introduced added content to the training format e.g. about bullying, social justice issues, etc. This material, while interesting and useful could have detracted from the task at hand-preparing the PLs for their specific role.
 - Most agree that training PLs in groups that include their counterparts from other schools is positive as it increases cross- fertilisation. Indeed PLs from different schools are talking about getting together. However, there are some who would prefer to train locally, within their own school setting only.
 - Some PL groups from different schools, which were trained together, received backpacks or other school supplies while others did not. This led to some confusion and a sense of competition between the groups, which were not desirable.
 - Some SWs are interested in taking on more of the PL training in a formal manner.
 - There still seem to have been issues about the food during the training sessions.

4.4.3 Settlement Worker Training

- There were some issues raised about the training of SWs fairly consistently. While this training was handled centrally, each site could send two (2) people- the Lead and Co-Lead for each school. However, many teams had more than 2 SWs at each site. SWs not included in the training felt left out and not as well equipped for the roles that they were called upon to play. To create cohesive and well functioning teams at each site, Coordinators have stated a need to have all SWs trained.
- There is a sense that the training for SWs held in August was too late. If they had not completed the tasks being covered in the session, (i.e. had overlooked some key activities) there was very little time left to get away to in fact get things going.

- Not all SWs completed the expected pre-training reading. It appears that the manual that needs to be covered in the training is large and intimidating to them. As well not all the activities in the NOW curriculum were covered in the training session.
- The facilitation training that SWs attended earlier in the year has been well received. It made them feel better equipped for their roles and also clearer about how to assist PLs to add in the “fun” element to the process. A remaining gap in the skills of SWs that was noted is in the area of project management skills- how to manage an intricate, high paced and demanding process such as NOW particularly in the final week of delivery. This needs to include the “people” part of project management- how to keep people on task.
- Many managers see this skill training for SWs as benefiting them in their overall roles in the schools and the community year round. It also builds team and agency capacity overall, so is greatly valued.
- Some sites differentiated between the roles of the SW on site for NOW. Some provided coaching support to PLs while another assumed responsibility for the myriad logistical details of running NOW such as food ordering, liaising with caretaking and front office for smooth resolution of issues, preparing certificates, picking up extra supplies etc. This possible role differentiation was not a focus of the SW training in August.

4.4.4 Teacher Selection and Training

- Generally teachers were selected for NOW by their School Principal. However, in some instances, SWs played a consultative role and in one case, selected the best teachers for the role.
- Many teachers who get involved with NOW are ESL teachers. However, there are instances where teachers from other academic areas of the school have participated.
- Overall there seems to be a sense that teachers fulfilled their roles well. They were seen to be supportive of the peer- led model. Some are more involved than others depending on their style- but this seems to fit well with the model of NOW. Some were able to ease relations with other administrative and support areas of the school, including caretaking.
- Teachers, like other members of the team, perform best if the roles are really clear. There is special need for clarity about who will jump in if PLs are mumbling, vague or do not get a message across clearly to students. Teachers who have a natural inclination to jump in are not always sure whether this is their job or the role of SWs to intervene and ensure the process moves forward as it should.

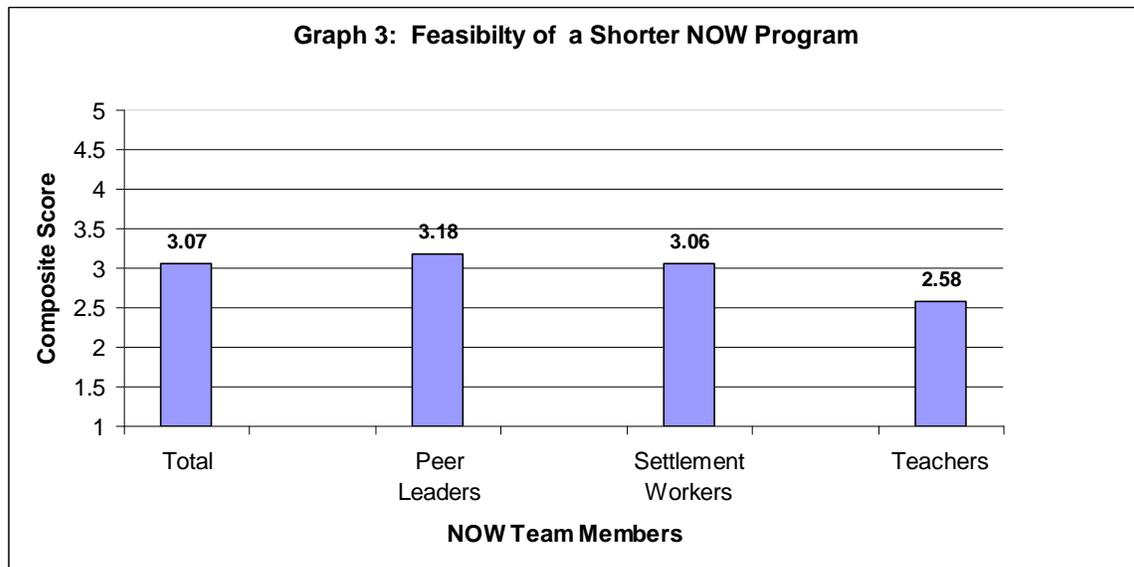
4.5. NOW Concept

The score in this section of the survey are highest of all the areas. This is not surprising. There is no doubt that all team members recognise the value of NOW and that the peer-led approach is the right approach. Table 7 shows the scoring.

Table 7: NOW Concept - Detailed Scores

Standard Measures	Totally agree	Neutral	Totally dis-agree	Rating Avg		
1. The NOW concept of former newcomer youth orienting their peers to school with support of settlement workers and teachers is an effective and meaningful way to ease the transition of newcomer youth	367	54	12	2	4.79	
2. The NOW program concept benefits Peer Leaders as much as the newcomer youth attending	365	56	13	2	4.79	
3. NOW benefits Settlement Workers and Teachers in other dimensions of their role/work	328	78	26	1	4.67	
4. This school should continue to offer NOW in the coming years to newcomer youth	393	28	8	4	4.84	
5. The NOW concept could work successfully with a shorter program instead of three and a half days.	132	65	65	47	126	3.07
6. The NOW program has/will improve the overall environment at our school in many different ways in the future	337	75	17	1	3	4.71

- Everyone believes that NOW should be continued. Schools in many Boards/Districts are asking to be part of NOW.
- While the idea of shortening NOW to fewer than the current 3.5 days appeals to some, the score of 3.1 is squarely in the middle. Graph 3 show the variation of views among team members



- There is some suggestion that it may be worthwhile to define a way to determine what the impact of a shorter NOW might be. To date the only other models to look at are the one-day middle school pilot in Mississauga and the one-day session for newcomer parents and youth in York Region. While these both have different objectives than NOW, they might have something to offer an in-depth analysis of the pros and cons of a shorter NOW.
- Many schools have low numbers of newcomer youth registering so do not feel that a full-blown NOW would work. A cluster approach was tried in one site this year and is being discussed/floated for possible piloting next year. A key learning from this year is that clustering can work **if** there are PLs from all the participating schools. If not, that vital link to in-school trained peer support and guidance is not available for newcomer youth.
- The other adjustment or issue related to the NOW model that remains is the fact that it is offered only as a high profile summer event. At present it is not integrated into SWIS as an on-going event that can occur at other times during the year to ensure that those newcomer students that arrive after the beginning of the academic year can also be well oriented to the school and community. Generally SW now does this orientation on a case-by-case basis with some protocols, strategies and tools that are designed for this purpose.

4.6. Management of NOW

This was the first year of decentralised management of NOW. In general, no major issues have emerged. However, some findings are worth noting:

- There does not seem to be any concern with the current division of labour between the Provincial Coordinator and local sites. That is, sites are content with the responsibilities they have and satisfied for training to be left at the provincial level.
- There is a general consensus among managers that they had not recognised the amount of work that went into last year's pilot. Some coordinators report being taken aback at the amount of effort that managing such an intense, high profile and time limited event takes especially when it is being offered in multiple sites. Some sites shared the management of NOW to make the workload more balanced but others did not.
- There is some feeling among managers that with all the other new projects that seem to come on line within SWIS that there may be a need for dedicated management resources of the annual NOW initiative especially if there is growth within the program or they are testing other delivery models.
- Most managers recognise the need to get started on planning for NOW 2009 almost as soon the new school year begins. Many are also already

developing/enhancing templates and procedures to assist with the roll out of NOW next year.

- Generally managers would like more flexibility within their budgets. This year most used a budgeting template provided by the Provincial Coordinator. While they were thankful for this, they now recognise that for subsequent budgets they need to tailor the cost centres to more adequately reflect their unique ways of delivering NOW.
- When budgeting, some centres were allowed to include resources to give students backpacks (containing school supplies to begin the year with) while others were not. There were also cost centres that did not work as well as they had hoped –e.g. Transit tickets could not be given to newcomer students at the student rate because they did not have school ID yet, there were overruns in the costs of materials and food etc. There was also some confusion about why sites had to pay for training materials if training was a centralised function.
- There is a sense that SWs are feeling that the enhanced roles they are taking in running NOW may warrant commensurate compensation.
- The Provincial Coordinator retains responsibility for all the training activities, curriculum adjustments/enhancements and coaching/troubleshooting with all sites around material development, graphic design, student recruitment/outreach strategies and other unforeseen start up issues. This proved to still be a heavy load for one person for the 4 months leading up to NOW.

5.0 Analysis and Recommendations

The NOW roll out was a large undertaking. The number of participating schools went from 8 to 40, the number of trainers from 4 to 24 and the number of PLs from ~ 100 to ~ 400. Major responsibilities for the planning and delivery of NOW were devolved to 13 participating sites. In spite of this degree of growth, the roll out was highly successful. There is no doubt that NOW remains an exciting, effective way to integrate newcomer youth into high school. All the data point to this.

However, there is room for improvement and issues that could be addressed to further strengthen NOW in future years. In this section those areas are highlighted and recommendations for consideration are made.

5.1. Sanction Model Enhancements

While the NOW concept and model overall are validated, the specifics about how and when to offer NOW are still being questioned. Basically there is an appetite in the field to discover the various ways that a trained peer-led model can be offered in shorter time frames, different configurations of schools, and at different times of

the year. This is healthy and piloting other ways of delivering the program could increase its reach and scope overall. This, in turn, would ensure that a larger group of newcomer youth are settling more quickly and successfully in high school..

However, the key core elements of NOW that should not be compromised in any variations that are tested.

Recommendation #1: As part of NOW's annual budgeting process, inquire what modifications/other models sites might like to pilot/test out and why. Fund those initiatives that have merit and the possibility of extending the reach of the program without sacrificing the following core elements of NOW:

- The NOW concept is retained – trained peer leaders who, with the support of SWs and teachers, provide intensive orientation and information to youth.
- PLs are themselves newcomer youth who have been in Canada for up to 2 -3 years
- Students attending NOW are newly arrived and attending school in Canada for the first time (with the possible exception of Grade 8 students who arrived late in the last year of middle school)
- Consistent, high quality, in depth training is provided to PLs and SWs from all participating sites based on a core universal curriculum.

5.2. Continue to Identify and Meet SW training Needs

The NOW Program is stretching the skills of SWs. They are being asked to learn and apply new skills - project management, hiring and supervision of team members, facilitation of groups and teams and event planning and implementation. It is also clear that SWs are a diverse group with diverse learning styles.

While some of the training gaps from the pilot year have been addressed, more have been identified. Furthermore, new SW staff are added to SWIS teams each year. Some of these staff played the coaching role while others attended to all the logistics of running NOW. These staff need to be equally as well equipped to fill the NOW roles. As well, there are indications that SW may wish to assume greater roles in the PL training. Finally, this year not all NOW team members were able to participate in all of the NOW training events. This left some people ill equipped to always step in when needed.

Recommendation #2: Continue to provide SW training throughout the year that targets the skills required for the NOW program and provide this training for any SWs who will be part of NOW. Consider strategies for all SW training that are visual as well as print based to accommodate the diverse learning styles that SWs seem to have.

Recommendation #3: Consider developing training for two (2) roles within NOW- the coaching/support role and a logistics role. In the coaching/support training ensure that all activities in the curriculum are reviewed along with any changes that may have been made since the last time such as the suggestions for expansion and accommodating activities. For the logistics role, enhance SW training with more event planning / site level skill development training.

Recommendation #4: Consider including all SWIS SWs in this training since, as the program expands and new staff come on board, most of them will be deployed to NOW at some point.

5.3. *Make Enhancements to the Train- the- Trainer Process*

High quality PL training is at the heart of the success of NOW. This year there were major changes to the training aspects of NOW with the expansion of the initiative across the province. It was essential to maintain the high quality of the training if NOW was to be successful.

Generally, this was accomplished. However, the recruitment process, which needed to start in the Spring, was hampered by the lack of information from sites about how many PLs they intended to recruit. The training was only one day long, and each of the activities in the curriculum was not reviewed to ensure consistent understanding of the purpose and expected outcomes. Finally, the train the trainer process did not adequately integrate the SWs who would be at the training and ultimately the coach/support for the PLS on site. This meant that the training teams of trainer and SW could not negotiate their roles based on existing relationships.

Recommendation #5: Increase train the trainers training to 2 days with the SWs joining in day 2 to ensure a team approach to PL training. Ensure that the trainers are fully immersed in the NOW curriculum including each activity,

5.4. *Continue to Enhance the Curriculum*

The continued success of NOW is partly due to a strong and meaningful curriculum that orients youth to school in Canada, gives them important information and helps them understand how to get support when they run into issues. However, in spite of the strength of the core curriculum and activities, differential needs of those students attending the program will continue to point to potential adjustments that could strengthen it overall or make it more accessible to specific sub-target groups.

Recommendation #6: With input from PLs, SWs and teachers, annually review the curriculum and activities, making enhancements and/or adjustments that keep it current, responsive and effective.

5.5. Anticipate Compensation Issues Related to Enhanced SW Roles

The roles of SW in NOW are important, intense, and highly sensitive. They, with the support of teachers, have the lives and futures of newcomer youth and PLs in their hands for the NOW week. They work long hours and manage a high level of detail. They are learning new skills to do this job and are beginning to ask about additional compensation.

Recommendation #7: For those SWs in lead and co-lead roles, consider what additional compensation, if any, they deserve. The compensation could be monetary or additional time off with pay, or some other form of recognition for the leadership responsibilities that they assume.

5.6. Ensure Clarity about the Scope and Rationale for Centralised vs. Site Specific Responsibilities and Costs

As this is the first year of a decentralised NOW, it is notable how few budget or boundary issues actually emerged. The sorts of issues that did emerge reinforce the need to review with coordinators, all of their responsibilities and rationale for each. This will further clarify what aspects of NOW are to be managed and budgeted for at the local/site level. Specific attention needs to be paid to the rationale for sites paying for anything to do with PL training,

There is also a need to clarify the degree of flexibility that each site has within the budgeting process. One area of clarity required has to do with the promotional materials - the degree to which each site is expected to use templates/tools that are provided vs. using the resources to implement other strategies.

Recommendation #8: Review and re-clarify with SWIS Coordinators the distinct tasks /responsibilities and parameters for budget that the Provincial Coordinator and local sites have, the flexibility that each has /does not have and the rationale for these guidelines.

5.7. Review & Enhance Central and Local Management Capacity Needs

Even with the role of the Provincial Coordinator in NOW reduced, there is a lot of work entailed in both the assigned areas but also all the coaching and mentoring with local sites around specific tasks. This is not a one-person job! As well, there is a lot of technical know how that is required centrally in terms of graphic design and the production of multilingual materials because many sites needed central support on how to accomplish this part of the pre-implementation process.

SWIS coordinators generally identify that the intensity and detail involved in delivering NOW in multiple sites is quite extensive. Not all found solutions that increased their capacity to comfortably manage all this especially in the month of August. Many report that they ended up shopping for supplies or personally getting certificates prepared etc.- tasks that were not part of their management role.

Recommendation #9: Based on the roll out experience, review the need for enhanced coordination capacity at both the central and local levels and ensures that sufficient resources are available for these important functions.

5.8. *Begin Planning for NOW in the Fall*

NOW is an intensive, complex program to plan and implement. Many factors hinge on successful planning with sufficient lead-time. For example, there are many schools that want to be part of the NOW family. However, SPOs may not have the SW resources to include them all. School selection needs to be handled sensitively. It also needs to happen in a timely fashion so that the number of PLS that will be recruited and trained can be determined. PL recruitment has become more formal and time intensive and needs to be completed before the end of the school year. The number of PLs directly influences the recruitment of trainers. Finally, Steering Committees need to play a central role in the evaluation of a completed NOW program and planning for the next one and this needs to fit in with their meeting schedules.

Recommendation #10: In the Fall, just after the completion of NOW, review the experience and begin planning for the implementation of the NOW initiative for the next school year. This planning should include a determination of how many sites will be selected for NOW, the target number of newcomer youth for each school and the concomitant number of PLS that will be recruited.

5.9. *Ensure Province Wide Consistency in Budget Parameters*

While it is reasonable and necessary for each site that will be offering NOW to have a high degree of local control about how to spend resources, in the area of the “gift” to newcomer youth of a backpack and school supplies, the inconsistency that exists may not be fair. There also appears to have been inconsistency about the PL:: student ratio for NOW programs. It is important that there be consistency in these and possibly other areas that SWIS Coordinators might be able to identify while at the same time retaining local autonomy and flexibility. Consistency reduces competition between schools/sites and helps to retain a broad branding of NOW as a Province wide initiative, not a school only event. For example, the PL:: student ratio might be higher if the NOW program was targeting a specific sub-target group that had greater needs. This will become even more urgent once decentralisation of the contracting to local CIC offices is complete.

Recommendation #11: Create consistency province wide about those items such as gifts items for newcomer youth and PL::student ratios, setting parameters for allowable expenses if it is deemed to be an acceptable expense. Ensure that if there are any other sensitive items such as this that they are also covered in the NOW budget parameters. Finally ensure that all those contracting with SPOs for NOW have guidelines to follow in the negotiations.

5.10. Continue Evaluative Activities to Ensure High Quality NOW Programs

This process has provided a large amount of rich data that allows for continuous improvement of the initiative. It would not be too difficult to either retain this as a monitoring function centrally in future years or suggest that NOW sponsoring agencies themselves repeat the survey so they can note any trends, anticipate issues and continue to improve the quality of their delivery. It would also be an effective mechanism to assess any innovation to the model by the addition of a few questions.

A periodic evaluation of NOW may be important to carry out every 3-5 years to provide an objective assessment of whether the original concept and model is continuing to be effective and how results compare between the growing number of sites and numbers of newcomer students reached. An additional dimension to this evaluation can focus on the longer-term impacts experienced by NOW participants.

Recommendation #12: Decide whether to conduct annual monitoring of NOW centrally or locally and equip stakeholders to undertake on-going monitoring.

Recommendation #13: Commission an arms length external evaluation process to measure the impact outcomes of NOW in 2010 i.e. five (5) years following the launch of NOW.

6.0 Conclusions

This brief evaluation has re-validated the logic and value of the peer led NOW model as a way of orienting and smoothly integrating newcomer youth into high school in Ontario. The scoring on the surveys really could not have been much higher. The interviews with managers and information from the surveys have shed light on some additional improvements that could be considered for NOW. Thirteen (13) recommendations are made which, if implemented, could further strengthen NOW so that it continues to thrive, expand and improve the lives of newcomer youth and their families.

Appendix 1

**Newcomer Orientation Week, 2008
Evaluation Survey
Draft, July 28, 2008**

This questionnaire asks for your feedback on the efficiency and effectiveness of the Newcomer Orientation Week (NOW) you have just completed. It is based on the ideal state – or standards of operation, which, if fully implemented, would lead to a highly successful initiative. It is important to analyse the “fit” between the ideal and the reality so that steps can be taken to begin to close any gaps/issues.

There are a total of at least 80 Settlement Workers, approximately 80 Teachers & about 400 Peer Leaders involved in NOW in the Province. To effectively evaluate the initiative, everyone’s input is important. All Peer Leaders, Settlement Workers and Teachers will have an opportunity to express their opinions. What you say on this survey questionnaire will be anonymous and confidential. Information will be grouped by question according to Settlement Agency and not by individual school. Please complete this survey by **Friday, September 5, 2008.**

Thank you for your participation.

Instructions: Throughout the questionnaire you will be asked to rate certain statements about how things worked in the NOW Program. Even if you do not have enough information to make a definitive judgment, please answer to the best of your ability. Periodically, you will be asked to provide a rationale for your views. This can include examples of situations, actions or behaviours that support your view. Please feel free to provide as many of these as you like, using the last page as you see fit.

Throughout the tool, the “NOW Team” refers to everyone- i.e. Peer Leaders, Settlement Workers and Teachers. Students who participated in NOW are named as “students”.

A. General Questions [Please choose one]

1. Are you a: Peer Leader Settlement Worker Teacher

2. Please identify the Settlement agency sponsoring/affiliated with your NOW program:

- New Canadians’ Centre of Excellence Inc., Windsor [High Schools: Forster, Catholic Central]
- Kitchener-Waterloo YMCA [High Schools: St. Mary’s, Forest Heights]
- SISO Hamilton [High Schools: McNab, Cathedral, Barton, Glendale, Sir John]
- Brampton Multicultural Community Centre [High Schools: Central Peel, St. Edmund Campion, Bramalea]

C. <u>NOW Curriculum</u>	Totally agree					Totally disagree				
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
1. The NOW curriculum met the school orientation needs of newcomer students who attended the program	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
2. There were no obvious gaps in the NOW curriculum	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
3. The curriculum was easy to use and adapt as needed	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
4. There were sufficient numbers & types of activities to keep students engaged	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
5. Newcomer students seemed very satisfied with their experience this week	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
6. Parents were involved in the activities of the NOW program at least once	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1

Comments: Why have you scored these items this way? [Provide examples of situations, actions or behaviours you observed/know about that support your views .]

D. <u>Peer Leader, Settlement Worker and Teacher Roles</u>	Totally agree					Totally disagree				
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
1. The NOW team of Peer Leaders, Settlement Workers and Teachers worked well together	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
2. All the NOW team members were clear about their roles and responsibilities during the week	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
3. All the NOW team members were well trained/prepared for their roles	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
4. There was effective communication between the various members of the NOW team	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
5. Decisions were made by the right people in a thoughtful, collaborative and timely manner	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
6. Team members felt supported by their colleagues (at the school or agency) as they fulfilled their roles in NOW	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
7. There was no role overlap evident between the various members of the NOW team.	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1

Comments: Why have you scored these items this way? [Provide examples of situations, actions or behaviours you observed/know about that support your views .]

<u>E NOW Week Experience Overall</u>	Totally agree		Totally disagree		
	5	4	3	2	1
1. The four (4) day NOW week went smoothly	5	4	3	2	1
2. All the newcomer youth were able to communicate with at least one member of the NOW team in their first language	5	4	3	2	1
3. There were sufficient numbers of PLs, Settlement Workers and Teachers available to support the program	5	4	3	2	1
4. Relations with the-school were smooth, supportive and cooperative	5	4	3	2	1
5. Registration of NOW participants went smoothly so that they are all able to start school on the first day.	5	4	3	2	1
6. The school's regular registration process of other students did not interfere with the NOW program	5	4	3	2	1
7. I am very satisfied with the experience this week	5	4	3	2	1

Comments: Why have you scored these items this way? [Provide examples of situations, actions or behaviours you observed/know about that support your views .]

<u>F NOW Concept</u>	Totally agree		Totally disagree		
	5	4	3	2	1
1. The NOW concept of former newcomer youth orienting their peers to school with support of settlement workers and teachers is an effective and meaningful way to ease the transition of newcomer youth and their families to Canada	5	4	3	2	1
2. The NOW program concept benefits Peer Leaders as much as the newcomer youth attending	5	4	3	2	1
3. NOW benefits Settlement Workers and Teachers in other dimensions of their role/work	5	4	3	2	1
4. This school should continue to offer NOW in the coming years to newcomer youth.	5	4	3	2	1
5. The NOW concept could work successfully with a two-day program instead of three and a half days.	5	4	3	2	1

6 The NOW program has/will improve the overall environment at our school in many different ways in the future	5	4	3	2	1
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Comments: Why have you scored these items this way? [Provide examples of situations, actions or behaviours you observed/know about that support your views.]

The best thing about NOW is

NOW could be improved by ____

Thank you very much for your input

Appendix 2

Newcomer Orientation Week (NOW)
Interviews with Coordinators re Operational/Management of NOW
Draft Questions

Introduction:

In this the second year of NOW, a different form of evaluation is being undertaken. This year all on site NOW team members (PLs, SWs and teachers) have been asked to fill in an on line survey which will be tabulated to give results by the agency that you work for- not by individual school. The survey will give you a good sense of the satisfaction team members have with NOW in their school and any areas where there might be room for improvement in how the program is organised and delivered to newcomer students.

For the second part of this year's evaluation, we have randomly selected 7 sponsoring agencies to talk about the overall management of NOW. The sample is comprised of 4 agencies that participated last year in the NOW pilot and 3 that are running NOW for the first time this year- or ~ 54% of the 2008 NOW participating agencies. This interview is intended to provide insight into the overall organisation and operation the NOW initiatives that your agency sponsored. Since this is the first year where agencies managed multiple NOW initiatives and their own budgets, it is important to understand the strengths and challenges of decentralisation of the management. This can lead to improvements in years to come.

The information you provide will be held confidential. It will be reported in consolidated thematic form with no attribution. Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. Promotion and Outreach

What outreach strategies did you use to recruit students for NOW? Which ones proved to be the most effective? [Probes: Banner, cards, personnel at school, personnel at assessment centres, flyers in buildings, use of PLs to spread the word etc.]

How well did the outreach work? Did you reach your target numbers of students? If not, what do you think accounts for the lower than anticipated numbers?

What will you change next year to improve the overall results of your promotion and outreach efforts?

2. Recruitment/ Training /Preparation of NOW Team

Peer Leaders

How did you recruit Peer Leaders? Are there any things you would change next year in your recruitment process?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Peer Leader training process? How did these impact on their performance during the NOW delivery? What changes, if any, to their training/preparation would you recommend?

Settlement Workers

How well were the Settlement Workers prepared for the various roles they were called on to play during the NOW initiative? How could the gaps/limitations if any be addressed in future years so that they are more comfortable/skilled in their roles within the NOW context?

Teachers

How were teachers selected to participate in NOW? What, if anything, would you try to change in this process next year?

What are the strengths and challenges that you observed in the way the teachers fulfilled their roles in NOW? How could any challenges be addressed for next year?

3. Logistics /Operations

How did things work out with the school(s) where the NOW programs were run? [receptivity of caretaking, ease of access to required space,

How were school administrative staff involved in the week? What feedback have you received re their perceptions of the effectiveness/benefit of the week for the students? For the school?

Were there any issues with registration of NOIW and/or non-NOW students so that they could start school in a timely manner?

Are there any budgetary issues that emerged in the process of rolling NOW out this year?

4. Policy/Conceptual Issues

Overall concept of NOW- what are the strengths of the concept of peers orienting peers with the support of teachers and settlement workers? What are any management issues related to running this type of program that need to be taken into account ?

What policy/larger conceptual issues if any emerged as you mounted the NOW initiative? With the school locally? With the school Board? With the assessment centre? Within your agency? related to the model?

5. Advice

If another school board/site asked for your advice about how to most effectively mount and manage multiple NOW initiatives, what advice would you give them?

Do you have any other feedback/advice to give at this time?

Thank you for your input!

Sample of Managers

New to NOW in 2008

Catholic Community Services York Region	Agnes Manasan
New Canadian Centre of Excellence Windsor	Iole Iadipaolo
OCISO	Wali Farah

Expanding NOW

Catholic Cross Cultural	Huma Nauman and Dan Rutembesa
SISO Hamilton	Souhaila Dihaini
Intercultural Community Neighbourhood Social Services	Susan Dales
Peel District School Board	Louise Clayton
North York Community House	Zestaline Kim