

CAMPUS NEWS

Kinulating Science- Spotlight on Grant Williams

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16 July 2014 - "What kind of music do you think we should have at this solid-particle party?" This is not a typical question asked in a grade 2 science class, but Dr. Grant Williams of the School of Education is not your typical teacher. What felt like an afternoon dance party to a gymnasium full of 7 year olds was actually a cleverly disguised chemistry lesson.

Williams is pioneering the field of kinesthetic simulations, or 'kinulations' as he has dubbed it, to teach scientific concepts to students of all ages.

"Most teaching and learning that I have experienced, from both a student and a teaching perspective, is fairly conversation based or

reading and writing based", said Williams. "This is totally different." For his kinulations, Williams visits a science class studying a concept such as the solar system, electrical circuits, plant growth, or states of matter. He gets the students out of their seats and moving around to represent various aspects of the concept. Throughout the exercise he is testing their understanding and pushing them to draw their own conclusions based on the model. It's a very co-operative and interactive style of learning.

Williams' research is evidence of his passion for both teaching and learning. According to Williams, "There's a certain energy that comes from being in front of a class and knowing that you're directly influencing someone's growth and learning." It is because of this passion that Williams made the switch three years ago away from administering the provincial K-12 Math/Science curriculum, to the St. Thomas School of Education. He was thrilled to begin teaching his own classes again. As he puts it, "when you're a teacher, you've got to teach... it's in your blood".

This past year, Williams received a Major Research Grant to develop a set of pilot kinulations and corresponding lesson plans. He hopes that this will become the basis of a larger SSHRC grant that would fund comparative testing of the kinulation method.