

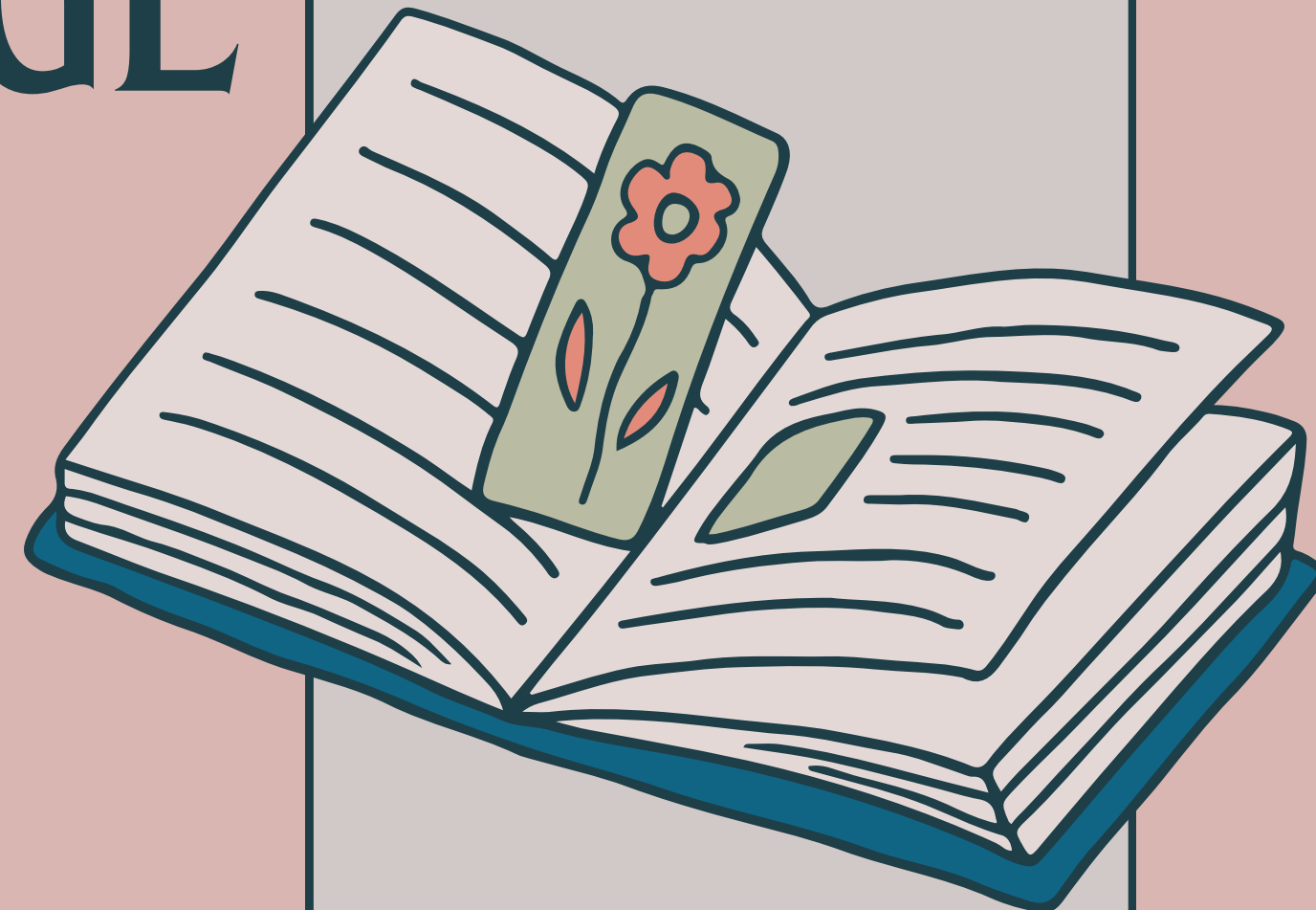
KATHLEEN MCCULLOCH-COP

STUDENTS 4 CHANGE

PED 4220

URBAN COMMUNITIES COHORT

FEBRUARY 2024

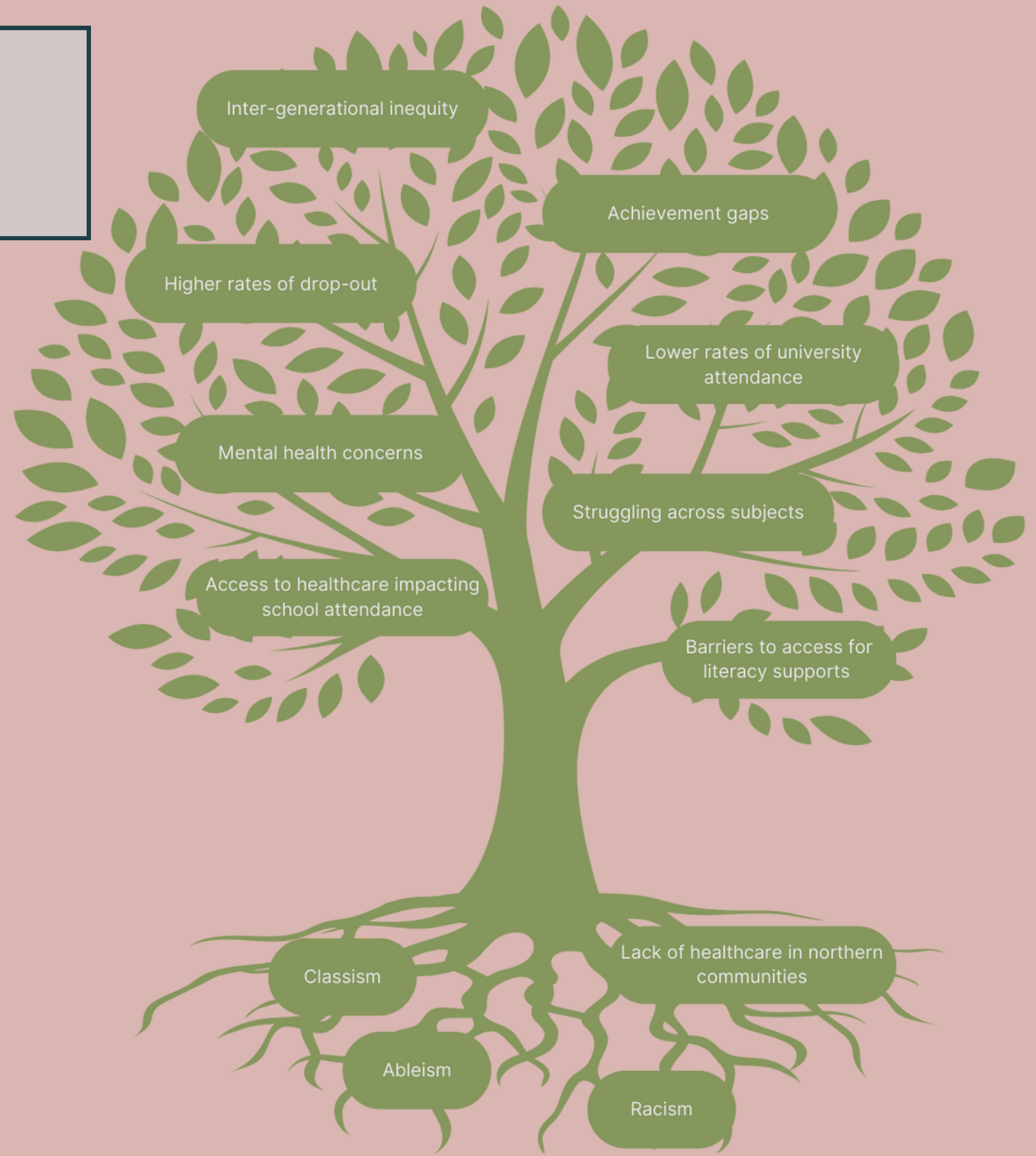
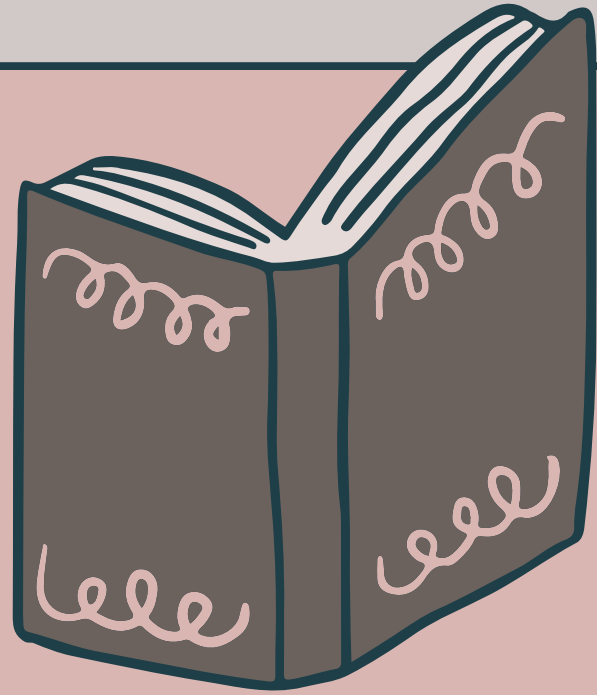


RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How can we as educators support students in their literacy development?
- How can children in long-term medical care settings access literacy resources?
- How can schools connect with and support children who are missing large amounts of typical schooling?



PROBLEM TREE



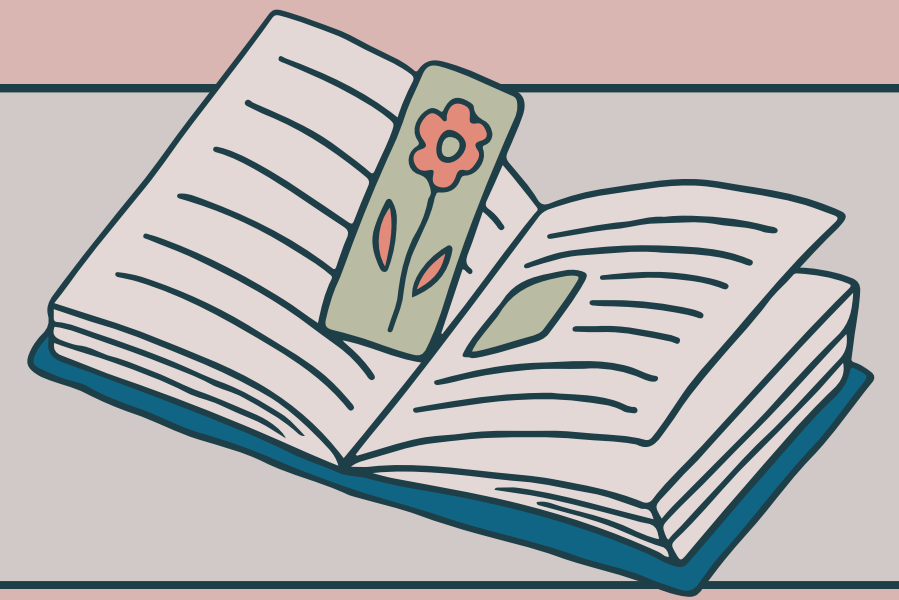
RATIONALE

After the Ontario Human Rights Commission's "Right to Read" inquiry report was published in 2022, literacy has been brought into the focus by boards, educators, and the Ontario Ministry of Education as a major issue for students. Particularly, students who belong to "certain *Code*-protected groups" (OHRC, pg 72) such as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit students, are particularly disadvantaged due to lower expectations or beliefs of 'inevitability' when it comes to learning disabilities or low literacy scores. Additionally, we know that students who deal with long-term and impactful health concerns, who are in long-term hospital stays or have to travel from their home community to access the care they need, miss large amounts of school, and are further disadvantaged in their ability to develop their literacy skills. Particularly in Ottawa, many of the children in long-term (or even short-term) stays at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO), have left their home communities from Nunavut in order to access the healthcare they need. Through this research project, I hope to find ways to connect with and support students in these situations with their literacy development.



PHOTOVOICE

WEDNESDAY BOOK CLUB



DO YOU LOVE BOOKS?
IS YOUR TO-READ SHELF
NEVER-ENDING?
DO YOU WISH
BOOKTOK WAS IRL?

JOIN BOOK CLUB!

WEDNESDAYS AT
LUNCH IN RM 343

SIGN UP HERE



This project began when a student on the first day of school asked if there was a book club that she could join. Seeing that St. FX didn't have that offered, I saw a spot that I could step in and help with. After posting these around the school, and sharing it as part of the announcement slides, I had nearly 20 students sign up. We began meeting on Wednesdays at lunch to discuss and share the books that they were interested in, reading, and enjoyed. The group soon became quite close, and many students said that it was the best part of their week. Looking to continue my research, I asked the students if there were any initiatives they would be interested in pursuing and supporting. Immediately, they began to think about how lucky they were to have access to books and a book club, and how children in long-term stays at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) often do not have access to this. I was overjoyed to see that they were already so invested in how to support other students, and thought it would be a perfect avenue to pursue.

CANDY SALE FOR CHEO



The students decided that trying to organize any fundraising before the holiday break would be rushed and conflicting with the other school initiatives going on at the time. So, upon returning from the holiday break, they began brainstorming and organizing what they could do to raise money for CHEO. They decided a candy sale would be easy, effective, and quick to put together. They created and posted flyers advertising the sale, and asked me to help them actually buy the candy to be sold. The sale itself went swimmingly – middle school students almost universally love candy (particularly candy they can buy for a dollar), and with the large population at the school, the students were able to sell enough to cover the cost of the candy and raise over \$60 to donate to CHEO to buy reading materials for children in long-term stays, which is a fantastic start!



PHOTOVOICE

READS2CHEO



While researching how to go about donating to CHEO, I found a program that aligned perfectly with the student's interests.

Reads2CHEO is a program that allows children, youth, and families to connect with and engage in stories and books, by posting videos and interviews with authors and readers reading children's books out loud. They thought this was a fantastic and really fun way to bring stories and books to children in long-term hospital stays, and wanted to find a way to donate to this initiative directly.

While I wasn't able to directly donate the funds raised to this program, I did request in the donation notes that the money be directed towards supplies and costs associated with it.



FOUNDATION

FONDATION



REFLECTIONS, FUTURE STEPS



This project was an incredible insight into how passionate students can be about providing children who are in long-term hospital stays with the supports and resources they need to make sure they are not left behind in their literacy learning. As mentioned in the rationale, children from northern Indigenous communities are often disproportionately affected by absences in their schooling as they have to travel farther and for longer periods when accessing healthcare. Combined with the barriers that face Indigenous students, and the lower expectations or beliefs of ‘inevitability’ when it comes to learning disabilities or low literacy scores, as reported by the Ontario Human Rights Commission’s “Right to Read” Inquiry Report. The Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) has many supports for children and families who are in long-term stays or experiencing the effects that having to travel long distances to access healthcare can have on schooling and literacy development. There are many ways for educators to connect with children and families in these situations, and contribute to these programs. Literacy development in particular has its own focus program from CHEO, with their *Reads2CHEO* program allowing families and children to engage with stories and reading. Students are able to contribute to CHEO, and to help their peers access these supports, making concrete change for their own communities, and even children from remote communities. Knowing about these programs and supports now, I hope that I as an educator can continue to connect with and make a difference for those children who are experiencing school absences for long-term hospital stays, and to be able to help students who are not support those who are.

RESOURCES



Reads2CHEO

CHEO Donations

OHRC Right to Read Inquiry Report

CHEO Aakaluk Clinic

Sensoy, O., & DiAngelo, R. (2017). *Is everyone really equal?* (2nd ed.). Teachers' College Press.