

Conseil scolaire catholique de district des Grandes Rivières: 2014 - 2015

Project Title	Transforming our Pedagogy through the Use of Technology
Description	<p>In 2014-2015, CSCDGR led three projects as part of its research initiative entitled <i>Initiative de recherche sur l'Innovation au 21^e siècle, 2014-2015 (Phase 4)</i>. These projects focused on 1) oral communication in early childhood; 2) a collaborative inquiry on ALF (<i>Actualisation linguistique en français-Communication orale</i>) and oral communication and 3) documenting our pedagogy.</p> <p>Oral Communication in Early Childhood. We pursued our research in 2014-2015, creating a hub of two schools in the Board's southern area and a hub of three schools in the Board's central area. The goal of this project is to improve oral communication in preschool and primary division students. The project is based on Carmel Crévola's research and writing on improving oral communication in schoolchildren. One of the foundational principles of the project is that oral communication must be taught explicitly in order for receptive language and expressive language to develop. Ms. Crévola states that teachers must give more thought to what they say to their students (i.e., their pedagogical language) because they often speak at a level that children are unable to comprehend.</p> <p>We used technology to support the oral communication project on many levels. Digital tablets became a feedback tool for teachers (reflective sharing practice), a tool for documenting traces, a tool for assessment for teachers, and a tool for creativity for students (e.g., Chatterkid). Interactive whiteboards proved very useful for projecting stimuli: photographs, videos, and sounds.</p> <p>Collaborative inquiry on ALF: This inquiry was based on the principle that if language is taught, every day, using strategies and activities for building vocabulary, the language competences of students will improve.</p> <p>Throughout the year, teachers and educators used different applications on the iPad to create learning activities to build vocabulary. The students used an application to record their voices and create a video from a photograph.</p> <p>The software program Excel was used to create documents making it easier to see students' entry and exit profiles. The data were presented in circle graphs, making it easier to see where students had made progress and where they had experienced challenges.</p> <p>When a child asked a question or when a problem arose during a game, the pedagogical team stepped in to find an answer or a solution by asking the children questions. This encouraged them to think, explore, observe, and ask questions—it encouraged them to learn. The team documented the entire process of inquiry. With the students, the team did a brief search on the Internet and posted the findings on the interactive whiteboard. In this way, the children also looked for answers to their questions.</p> <p>The pedagogical team showed the students the film clips they were making on a regular basis. The children liked seeing themselves in the clips. They saw the entire process that they had used to arrive at the end result.</p> <p>Documentation is useful for showing parents their children's progress. A virtual wall</p>

	<p>was shared with parents where they could see their child in action. This made it possible to share what was happening in the classroom and to inform parents about their child's learning. The documentation gave the children an opportunity to review what they had learned and to keep going.</p>
Context	<p><i>Number of students: 918</i></p> <p><i>Number of teachers: 45</i></p> <p><i>Number of schools: 22</i></p> <p><i>Grades/Program: Preschool and primary divisions, Grades 4 to 8</i></p>
Impact on Students	<p><i>1 – Survey providing feedback on improvements in oral communication with the use of technology</i></p> <p>The survey results indicate that most of the respondents were almost entirely in agreement that technology influenced their students' oral communication. There was the audio dimension (e.g., stories, songs, videos, instructions for games), which works on receptive language. There was the visual dimension (images, videos, students working), which sparks students' interest and curiosity and stokes their desire to communicate. The survey respondents reported that technology stimulates interaction between students (expressive language) in the form of spontaneous conversations and exchanges.</p> <p>According to the survey, winning practices that use technology include: student self-regulation (descriptive feedback using an iPad); keeping students interested in their learning (applications); and getting students involved in their learning process (Attachment 8).</p> <p><i>2 – Survey providing feedback on the oral communication hubs</i></p> <p>According to the survey, all of the teachers felt that this approach had had an impact on their teaching practices for oral communication. They reported that explicit instruction in oral expression provided a framework that created opportunities for getting their students to talk. What is more, this process is readily transferable to other subjects and situations. In fact, some teachers now use it all day long. The teachers also agreed that this approach had a visible impact on their students' oral communication. They talked more and took more risks in expressing themselves; they were more comfortable sharing their ideas and more confident expressing themselves orally. All of the respondents noted that the students had made progress. One teacher noted that the students in her group could now form complete sentences from interesting ideas.</p>
Impact on Instruction	<p>The techno survey revealed that three practices changed with the integration of technology: use of the interactive whiteboard, integration of iPads into the learning centres, and use of Google Drive.</p> <p>The teachers were making increasing use of the interactive whiteboard to create educational games and motivate their students. Similarly, they were integrating iPads into their learning centres to spark the students' interest in new applications. The teachers were using Google Drive for sharing and for communicating with</p>

	<p>participants in the oral communication project.</p> <p>Almost all of the respondents said that technology had helped them to observe their students and collect and analyze traces of oral communication. Most reported that technology, such as the iPad, made it possible to go back and look at the context in which the students were learning—something that is not always possible with direct observation and note-taking.</p> <p>In response to questions about their strengths, respondents reported that they were more resourceful, adapted more quickly to new things, and felt more comfortable integrating new technologies. They wanted to integrate these practices into their teaching.</p> <p>Their most frequently expressed wish was for training on using technology more effectively. Their second most frequently expressed wish was for opportunities to practice their newfound knowledge.</p> <p>They really appreciated the support they received, especially with the video clips. They reported that the videos enabled them to evaluate themselves and to modify their teaching and learning practices.</p>
<p>Impact on System</p>	<p>In our Board, we are seeing a complete transformation in our teachers in terms of their pedagogical culture and practices. The types of coaching that we have provided (PLC, video clips, etc.) and, especially, the reflective sharing that has resulted have transformed their teaching practices.</p> <p>Technology was an asset in this process; it provided the tools they needed to facilitate, expand, and enrich their reflective thought processes and analyses. Coaching enabled those involved to make significant personal and professional progress. This new culture of collaboration can now be shared more widely in our schools and in our Board.</p> <p>Based on our teachers' comments, it is possible to say that integrating technology into our oral communication activities has had a positive impact on learning. The new approaches that use technology really got the students engaged in learning activities. We therefore feel that the use of technology made it possible to optimise the learning and teaching strategies in the oral communication approach.</p> <p>One of the Board's schools got parents involved in the oral communication project, which gave them a more active role in their child's acquisition of language skills. The results of this initiative show that partnerships between the school and the home can be beneficial for students and that maintaining and expanding the oral communication/parent partnership in years to come would be a good idea. The Board is looking at how to use technology to further develop this partnership. A website such as padlet.com would make it possible to create a virtual wall documenting learning in the classroom that could then be shared with parents. At home, students could share what they are experiencing and learning at school. Parents would be more fully informed about what is happening in their child's class and have a better grasp of the objectives for learning.</p>

NOTE: Information in the summary is taken directly from the data contained in the final project report.