

Conseil scolaire catholique du Nouvel-Ontario: 2014 - 2015

Project Title	School-Family Communication and Collaboration in the Digital Age
Description	In the context of technology-based teaching and learning in the 21st century, ongoing collaboration and effective communication by means of teacher-student partnerships and student-student partnerships for learning foster student success. <i>Conseil scolaire catholique du Nouvel-Ontario</i> chose Microsoft Office 365 and its suite of Cloud applications to promote and facilitate collaboration between students, and between students and their teachers.
Context	<p><i>Number of students:</i> 192</p> <p><i>Number of teachers:</i> 9</p> <p><i>Number of schools:</i> 5</p> <p><i>Grades/Program:</i></p>
Impact on Students	The competences at the centre of the innovation research project are communication and collaboration. Using the suite of apps in Microsoft Office 365, the students developed competence in communication through opportunities to communicate with their teacher and peers on their tasks and to receive feedback from them. They were then able to use this feedback to improve their performance, directly in connection with assessment for learning. In addition, the students developed competence in collaboration by working together on tasks in the classroom and elsewhere. Microsoft Office 365 is in the Cloud; as a result, the students are not restricted to school time for working on their assignments, which they can do anywhere, at any time. Through the Excel survey, they gained essential knowledge in terms of peer feedback and evaluation. They learned how to offer constructive feedback based on specific criteria, enabling their peers to improve and vice versa. They learned how to use feedback from their teacher and/or the other students to make progress in their own learning and achievement.
Impact on Instruction	<p>Use of Microsoft Office 365 resulted in visible changes in teaching and learning practices and implementation of the curriculum. By encouraging the use of these tools to communicate with [other] students and offer descriptive feedback, the students had access to written communication at all times and were able to use it to improve their learning. Instead of receiving verbal feedback (which they often forgot and did not use to progress toward their summative assessment), the students could refer to this feedback constantly and work on aspects required to stay on the path to success. As a result, this practice had an impact on evaluation practices both <i>for</i> learning and <i>as</i> learning.</p> <p>Following the integration of this technology, there was also a change in the physical and social learning environment. The configuration of the classrooms changed, with groupings of desks that enabled the teacher to move easily from group to group, asking questions and providing support. The students were constantly interacting in the classroom, outside the school, and outside of regular classroom time.</p> <p>The impact of the learning partnerships and related teaching and learning strategies such as communication and collaboration between the teacher and the students and</p>

	<p>between students was positive for both the teacher and the students. We noticed that prior to introducing Microsoft Office 365, teacher-student and student-student communication and collaboration only happened in the classroom and during school hours. With this initiative, teachers and students were not limited to the four walls of the classroom or to the school bell for communicating and collaborating on school work. Teachers changed their practices, providing ongoing descriptive feedback to students and constant support outside of classroom time.</p>
<p>Impact on System</p>	<p>This initiative helped to increase system activities, enabling the Board to continue offering a variety of training sessions, modelling in the classroom, and differentiated support to teachers during the school year.</p> <p>It was also possible to continue with the training on innovation research projects from previous years. The teaching staff involved in Phase 1 of the blended learning project for Grades 7 and 8 called <i>CODE 1 – Apprentissage hybride en 7^e et 8^e</i> were introduced to new mediatized resources and emerging technology tools (e.g., Microsoft Office 365, the Virtual Learning Environment, the iPad, etc.). This enabled them to further enrich the blended learning experiences of their students and to continue networking and sharing best practices. This year, newly hired teachers and teachers returning from leave had an opportunity to participate in a repeat of the training offered last year on the implementation of a data collection, management, and analysis tool making it possible to more effectively monitor the progress of all students, following the principles for assessment found in the policy document entitled <i>Growing Success</i> (the project called <i>CODE 3 – Le Calepin du Coffre du CSCNO</i>). These last two initiatives ensure that research projects from previous years continue to be relevant for our Board.</p> <p>Having said this, the Board’s pedagogical team was able to offer differentiated professional development and to continue to build the ability of teachers to implement pedagogical practices that are based on technology and that focus on the development of their students’ 21st century competences and to transform their teaching practices and optimize their students’ learning.</p> <p>More directly in connection with Phase 4 of the research on innovation in the 21st century (School-Family Communication and Collaboration in the Digital Age), individualized training and coaching were offered particularly to teachers and principals testing the new CSCNO parent/student portal that was developed by an in-house design and programming team (see 1st Theory of Action). In the spring, training sessions on Microsoft Office 365 (see 2nd Theory of Action) were offered to members of the Board’s pedagogical team and to specific teachers and student for the first phase of system-wide deployment of Microsoft Office 365. The pedagogical goal for use of the suite in the classroom was to foster communication and collaboration and to promote the development of digital-age language skills in students.</p> <p>The first theory of action developed as part of Phase 4 comes out of the observations, practices, and suggestions of teaching staff who integrated use of the Calepin du Coffre (Phase 3 project) into their practices for teaching, assessment, and sharing feedback with students. Several teachers asked for a reliable, user-friendly, secure tool for closer, ad hoc communication on student progress with parents identified in the Calepin. The second theory of action developed as part of Phase 4 draws its inspiration from the first research project on blended learning in the classroom and further</p>

	<p>development of the students' 21st century competences, particularly, face-to-face and remote communication, collaboration, and creativity.</p> <p>This initiative greatly helped to expedite the process of developing a vision for learning in the digital age and the process for revising/developing administrative policies and directives for responsible use of the Internet, the technological tools available to staff and students (e.g., tablets), the Board's website, the schools' websites, the parent/student portal, and Microsoft Office 365. The official launch of the new vision for learning in the digital age at CSCNO and a system-wide presentation of these administrative directives (new and revised) is scheduled for our professional learning days and training sessions in 2015-2016.</p>
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NOTE: Information in the summary is taken directly from the data contained in the final project report.