

## Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board: 2014 - 2015

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Learning For All Phase III: Taking It To The Cloud!</b>
<b>Description</b>	<p>Our project focused on the integration of digital technology in the area of assessment for and as learning to support the achievement and engagement of all students. Teachers and students explored how the integration of cloud based resources including Google Apps For Education (GAFE), D2L resources and devices transforms student learning, instruction and assessment practices.</p> <p>This year’s innovation research initiative focused on providing GAFE access to Grades 7 - 12 students and teachers to enable the development of the core practices of assessment. Our research initiative also included select classrooms that piloted a 1:1 Chromebook device and integrated IPADs to foster creativity and collaboration at the elementary level. At the secondary level, three mobile labs of Chromebooks (90) were provided to support the integration of GAFE to enhance student - teacher collaboration and with a focus on developing the core practices of assessment such as descriptive feedback.</p> <p>Technology, in conjunction with effective pedagogy, played a key role in the shift from teacher as the ‘keeper of knowledge’ to facilitator where students are at the center of their own learning. Over the course of this research project, students and teachers explored cloud based technologies and virtual learning environments where learning and resources were not limited to the school day or by access and could be completely personalized to the student.</p>
<b>Context</b>	<p><i>Number of students: 75</i></p> <p><i>Number of teachers: 7</i></p> <p><i>Number of schools: 3</i></p> <p><i>Grades/Program: 2 elementary classrooms (Grade ¼ &amp; Gr. 7/8), 2 secondary classrooms</i></p>
<b>Impact on Students</b>	<p>Students were given the opportunity to use Google Chromebooks on a 1:1 basis and Google Apps For Education (GAFE) as a tool to support their learning. The use of these tools has not only increased the level of student engagement but contributed to the development of student-to-student and teacher-to-student partnerships as collaborative learners.</p> <p>In a relatively short amount of time and given the current focus of integrating cloud based resources into instruction students are beginning to develop a high degree of collaboration skills as a result of utilizing cloud based resources (GAFE/various APPS) as a key enabler. Students’ quality of work is improving throughout the course of the project as evidenced by baseline tasks, culminating learning tasks and student surveys. Students report that utilizing GAFE on a regular basis improves the collaboration between peers and between students and teachers. Feedback from teachers is timely and ongoing to students utilizing GAFE. For example, teachers and students are collaborating on one document. Therefore, for students the integration of cloud based resources is beginning to have a high impact on their learning.</p> <p>As one teacher reported: “This initiative has changed the way my students look at learning. It has been a “transformation of a classroom”. My classroom has students with varying needs. 52% of the students in my classroom have a specific learning need. iPads have brought a cultural shift in my classroom. Using iPads has provided hope and building a student sense of “I CAN”.</p>

	<p>Evidence in relationship to achievement is evident in increasing in Levels of Achievement with use of the continuum and co-created success criteria. Students developed problem solving skills and strategies through exploring Apps and integrating the iPad technology to make their thinking visible.</p> <p>Social Collaboration was evident in the partnerships created through using the integration of mobile devices and cloud based technology (GAPE / Apps). Students were teaching each other in the process and also the special needs students were assisted by their peers. It was a true partnership.</p>
<p><b>Impact on Instruction</b></p>	<p>One of the greatest changes in teaching practice that was noted throughout this year's innovation research project was in the area of assessment for and as learning. In regards to student work, focus shifted from quantitative to qualitative products. Instead of assigning a variety of tasks that may or may not have been engaging or invoked critical thought, tasks that were meaningful and engaging were developed. The focus was more on the process of student learning as opposed to the outcome. Assessment practices changed from a focus on assessment <i>of</i> learning to assessment <i>for</i> and <i>as</i> learning. GAPE facilitated ongoing communication with students. As students submitted their tasks for feedback, anecdotal notes of their progress were one form of data collection that helped teachers understand the thinking process of each of their learners.</p> <p>Our innovation research focus also impacted teacher practice by further developing differentiated instructional practices. In classrooms, students and teachers recognized all learners have different learning strengths and learning needs. Students were provided choice when demonstrating their learning.</p> <p>When collectively assessing the impact on teacher practice, one of the trends that emerged throughout the course of this learning journey was the release of teacher control.</p> <p>As indicated by one teacher: "As a teacher you do not need to know everything. You need to have the courage to let go and give the students the freedom to explore the digital resources before an assignment is given. ... The important thing for me as a teacher is to let the students have voice in creating the learning goals, creating success criteria and deconstructing curriculum expectations.</p>
<p><b>Impact on System</b></p>	<p>"Taking It To The Cloud Phase II" has provided a solid foundation for our system to scale up and sustain pedagogically-driven, technology - enabled practices that is rooted in sound assessment for and as learning practices. Our innovation work is directly aligned with and is a key strategy to support the Assessment For and As Learning focus in our Board Improvement Plan For Student Achievement (BIPSA -3 year plan) as well as the achievement of our board ENDS (Strategic Outcomes for Students). A system wide collaborative inquiry will be a next step to begin to build a sustainable model of teaching and learning. As a result of our innovation research initiative our system Teaching and Learning Through Technology Committee (TLTC) have developed the following system vision:</p> <p>As a system we will focus on fostering the following 21st century learning skills of our students: digital fluency, collaboration, problem solving, communication, critical thinking, creativity and innovation. Through this focus, all students will thrive in reaching their full potential, embrace lifelong learning, live the richness of their faith and be contributing members in our global competitive world."</p>

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