St. Clair Catholic District School Board: 2014 - 2015

Project Title	**Leveraging Digital for Deep Learning and Student Engagement**
Description	In this project we are connecting the learning from previous rounds of the TLF Research Initiatives. We learned that we need to build capacity in our teachers to better support our students with IEPs and that using technology more effectively, ensuring that students have access to the tools whenever needed, will lead to greater success for these students (Round 2 learning). We also learned that our teachers need much support in using technology and understanding 21st Century teaching and learning concepts (Round 3 learning). We chose to target a group of teachers where we find that these two key areas of our learning come together – that is, Applied courses in secondary schools. These courses have a high percentage of students with IEPs, and we find that the use of technology in these courses is less than optimal. Students with IEPs who need assistive technology do not always have quick access to the tools and are often reluctant to use them due to their discomfort in being identified as having a disability. Another issue in our Applied courses is the lack of rich tasks as teachers hold firm to the belief that the students cannot meet the challenge of more cognitive demand and intellectual engagement. By increasing their understanding of rich tasks, and learning more about integrating technology effectively, and by a deeper understanding of the capacity to learn of their students with IEPs (especially when using their digital tools to assist), teachers will see that students in Applied courses are more than capable of deep learning and intellectual engagement.
Context	*Number of students*: 525 *Number of teachers*: 21 *Number of schools*: 2 *Grades/Program*: Grade 9 Applied English, Science, Geography and Religion
Impact on Students	In reviewing the Google Slides that were posted by each teacher, we have identified that student learning has been positively impacted. Teachers have reported that students were fully engaged in using the technology, and that many more students completed the tasks and on time than in previous tasks. Students achieved higher grades in the tasks as well. Students have commented in many of the examples posted, that they enjoyed using the technology, having more choice in tasks, and in working collaboratively with peers. Teachers noted that students could complete tasks more efficiently using the technology.
Impact on Instruction	Teachers were much more aware of what students needed for learning. They noted the engagement of students and offered much more choice in their assessment tasks. Assessment tasks were developed to reflect deep learning. Teachers became more responsive in their instruction as they were very interested in learning whether or not the change in their practice would work. Some of the teachers recognized a shift in their role as director of the learning and developed true partnerships with their students.

	The Special Education teachers who assisted the team in this project were able to continue developing stronger partnerships with the classroom teachers. This has not been past practice and we are encouraged to see this development. In one of our secondary schools, the special education model is being revised as a result. Teachers noted that creating rich tasks was a challenge, and they do need more time to fully understand all components of the Qualities of a Rich Task. They are becoming more comfortable with using the Google tools that were suggested for the tasks and are anxious to learn more about other tools as well. Subject specific teachers from both of our secondary schools have continued to communicate and collaborate using the shared Google Drive folders for the first time and are sharing ideas and resources. They are learning more about how to co-create success criteria for student tasks, and after reviewing some of the samples, it is apparent that there is much more to do in developing their understanding of success criteria. Teachers have commented to our support team that they now have a much better understanding of the IEPs for their students and are now much more confident of the ability of the students to be able to complete the rich tasks.
Impact on System	In one of our secondary schools, as a result of the collaboration that took place between the special education teachers and classroom teachers during this project, a new model of support is planned. Each special education teacher in the school will be assigned to work with the classroom teachers in the departments of the project, for a specific block to time each day for co-teaching in the classroom. This has been an unintended, but exciting consequence of the project and we look forward to the impact of this partnership on student and teacher learning and will share the results with our other secondary school (as well as elementary schools). This project was implemented simultaneously with our New Pedagogies for Deep Learning (NPDL) project and a result, we now have over 60 educators involved in incorporating deep learning, technology and 21st Century competencies in our system. The results of both projects are highlighted in the monitoring plan of our Strategic Plan and BIPSA in order to ensure that we continue to spread this learning beyond the project groups. School administrators will be shown the results of this project during their Leadership meetings in early fall in order to highlight the impact of the teacher and student learning.

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