

## Wellington Catholic District School Board: 2014 - 2015

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Exploring Innovative Pedagogical Practices and Universal Accessibility</b>
<b>Description</b>	<p>[The purpose of the project is] exposing teachers to Google Apps for Education and Chrome’s Accessibility tools (i.e. Read &amp; Write for Google) to support universal design principles, our boards Foundations of Best Practice (Assessment Drives Instruction, Critical Literacy, Inquiry-Based Learning, Student Engagement, Differentiated Instruction, Gradual Release of Responsibility, and Flexible Groupings) and engage students in tasks they would not be able to complete without the use of technology.</p> <p>The project focused on engaging students with the use of technology and de-stigmatizing the use of text to speech and speech to text software by making it available to all students.....BLENDED LEARNING.</p> <p>Chromebooks and iPads made available to classroom teachers and students allowed for equity of outcomes and access to Google Apps for education and accessibility tools.</p>
<b>Context</b>	<p><i>Number of students:</i> 300</p> <p><i>Number of teachers:</i> 10</p> <p><i>Number of schools:</i> 7</p> <p><i>Grades/Program:</i> Grades 7-10, Literacy-focused courses</p>
<b>Impact on Students</b>	<p>The teacher who participated in the project noted students who had previously been disengaged completing assignments and using tools such as speech to text or text to speech were much more engaged.</p> <p>Many of our teachers engaged students in descriptive feedback work using Google Docs and the comment feature embedded within this app. Here, students were commenting on their own work related to success criteria, commenting on the detail (or lack thereof) of other student’s work and responding to teacher feedback within the comment feature forum. Teachers reported that student engagement and task completion was much greater than had they done the task by traditional means (i.e. pencil and paper).</p> <p>When students were asked at the conclusion of the project to comment on how GAFE had an impact on their work habits (learning skills) student responses were varied, but the majority indicated that there was some impact on a learning skill.</p>
<b>Impact on Instruction</b>	<p>Several teachers commented on the value they saw in the whole day Professional Learning sessions that were offered where teachers would share the learning and progress that took place in their classrooms. Teachers saw value in hearing from other educators from different backgrounds. At times, teachers took comfort in the fact that all educators were on a learning curve and struggles existed in each and every classroom.</p>
<b>Impact on System</b>	<p>Several actions ... demonstrate the impact this project has had moving to a broader audience. We have hosted after school Google sessions for interested teachers outside of the original project. We have also hosted information</p>

	<p>sessions for our administrators, program department, SERTs and EAs that outline the work being done in the current technology-enabled project and the vision moving forward based on research-based findings.</p> <p>We have re-organized our digital team. Our team is now composed of a Digital Coach who will work closely with elementary CODE classrooms and SERTs. Our Technology-Enabled Learning Teacher will promote findings from past CODE projects and promote them more widely in a secondary CODE classroom setting while developing e-learning courses and teachers. Our Digital Lead will oversee an FDK Pilot project involving android tablets and act as a liaison between tech services and the digital team.</p> <p>When selecting participants for our digital projects, we ask principals to approach teachers who are enthusiastic about new learning, but who may not have a strong technology background. “Mid-Adaptors” have proven to have the most social capital among staff at their site and we have seen enthusiasm explode when these target teachers speak of the work they are doing in their classrooms with their colleagues.</p> <p>We need to be device agnostic moving forward. Google Apps for Education provides the platform by which we do not have to choose one device for our entire district.</p> <p>We need to enhance our student to device ratio without moving into a one to one ration. Our initial project started with devices that satisfied a 1 to 5 device to student ratio. While teacher participants appreciated any number of devices in their classroom our feedback indicated more Chromebooks were needed (in intermediate classrooms) to enhance the learning experience. Future projects will see devices distributed to teacher participants in an approximate 1 to 3 ratio.</p> <p>There is still a stigma attached to accessibility tool use. Student use of “assistive technology” sat at approximately 3% going into this project. At the conclusion of the project student use of tools such as Read &amp; Write for Google was up to 33% of those surveyed. While this data demonstrates growth, we are still seeing stigma attached to the use of some of these tools. In September 2105 our board will have Read &amp; Write for Google available to every student across the district. Promoting the use of this tool will support universal design principals and is an attempt to support enhancements to student achievement.</p>
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*NOTE: Information in the summary is taken directly from the data contained in the final project report.*