

James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board: 2015 - 2016

Project Title	Incorporating Technology in the Classroom as a Means of Supporting Student Success with a Special Emphasis on Assistive Uses
Description	<p>The target group will be the students writing the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test. These students come from mainly the Grade 10 ENG2P and ENG2D courses with some previously eligible students from Grade 11 re-writing. Students identified as being previously eligible were selected by the literacy committee at the beginning of the school year based on their chances for success if given the opportunity to re-write the test.</p> <p>A special focus for this project will be examining the OSSLT success for the 8 students who will be allowed accommodations during the OSSLT. This is the first year NLSS has had the infrastructure in place to support students with electronic assistive technologies. The focus for this portion will therefore be using student success on the OSSLT using assistive technology versus previous tests where said technology was not available.</p>
Context	<p><i>Number of students: 39</i></p> <p><i>Number of teachers: 3</i></p> <p><i>Number of schools: 1</i></p> <p><i>Grades/Program: Gr.10 ENG2P and ENG2D, eligible Gr.11 re-writing</i></p>
Impact on Students	<p>Each student has a registered school Google account. As well, more devices were purchased to allow greater availability of technology to students in the building. In a survey distributed to and responded by 72 students at the start of June, 57 students agreed or strongly agreed that technology use in the classroom enhances their learning. 49 respondents agreed or strongly agreed felt that they are more engaged when using technology in class. 58 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that computers and technology enhance their daily life.</p> <p>In classrooms, students are using technology as a means to collaborate with their classmates and others in their studies.</p> <p>Teacher comment: <i>“Technology has improved the speed of learning and deepens the understanding a student can have for a specific subject.”</i></p> <p>Student comment: <i>“Technology has helped me throughout school by giving me access to online resources in which I use to research questions that I may not understand.”</i></p> <p>[T]hose needing accommodations writing the OSSLT saw an improvement when using technology. For example, a group of 8 students wrote a mock test. Without any technological support, accommodated students did not perform well. Using a scale based on the experiences of teachers who have marked the OSSLT, it was estimated that these student scores ranged from 245 to 295, with 300 being a</p>

	<p>pass. In March about a week prior to the test, these 8 students were given the opportunity to test Read &amp; Write, an app that allows text-to-speech and speech-to-text, in preparation for the OSSLT. After the test, many of the students felt they better understood the material and being able to use the speech-to-text and text-to-speech helped them. For the students who wrote the test using technology, 1 was successful with the other 6 scoring 280-295, a large improvement from their earlier scores. It is felt that had this technology been available earlier, there potentially would have been more students be successful.</p>
<p><b>Impact on Instruction</b></p>	<p>Technology adoption at school-level has been slow in the past due to lack of reliable infrastructure. However, now that infrastructure has been improved, there has been a significant increase in teachers using technology at the school. The first step this year was to provide each staff member with an iPad with the same software that is available for student use. Also, each teaching staff member had the opportunity to meet with the TELT one-on-one for one hour sessions. Teachers were divided into PLC groups this year with a focus on using technology as a means of promoting deep thinking and inquiry and sharing with their PLC mates. Each of these sessions allowed teachers to try new approaches to using technology in the class.</p> <p>There are times where students are unable to attend school because of transportation delays, illness, medical appointments or other reasons and at times felt stressed upon returning to class in an effort to catch up on work. With the virtual space teacher and students are always present with current information as well as easier communication. Because of the ease of using a blended-learning approach, some teachers have elected to teach their classes in a totally paperless environment.</p> <p>When an assignment is uploaded, the teacher has the ability to see each student's work. This is important as teacher are able to provide ongoing feedback and suggestions as the student works. This has been greatly received by teacher as they are now able to support students throughout their work and provide feedback in a manner where neither student nor teacher feels overwhelmed.</p> <p><i>"Students who are more hesitant and shy to present information orally are able to use different Apps and Google Classroom to verbally and visually share their learning and new information."</i></p> <p><i>"A great example came this semester when a student has to miss a handful of classes due to transportation issues that are faced in our school community. The student was able to complete and submit assignments from home (on time!) using Google Docs and through access to Google Classroom. Utilization of such forms of technology allow students to access resources and enable them to produce quality work in a timely manner, even on days that they are unable to attend classes."</i></p>

<b>Impact on System</b>	<p>The creation of a virtual portal allows all staff to be connected and important correspondence to be delivered electronically. Alongside the portal, secure cloud-based folders were set up for IEPs, emergency lesson plans and the sharing of forms and documents. The key has been to have staff experience authentically the digital world that students live in.</p> <p>There has been an increase in technology-based platforms and approaches from staff which have resulted in a demand for more technology to be made available. As inquiry-based learning expands, teachers want to be able to develop the skills to deliver in a manner that promotes student engagement and achievement. As well, increased use of technology will allow for greater use of tracking data by office staff and will have an impact on aiding the ongoing improvement of student and staff well-being.</p>
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