

Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board: 2015 - 2016

Project Title	Learning For All: Taking It To The Cloud
Description	<p>This year’s Innovation Research Initiative will extend the focus of providing GAFE access to students and staff to enable the development of the core practices of assessment: creating rich tasks that are aligned with curriculum expectations, learning goals and success criteria; co-constructing a common understanding of learning goals and success criteria; providing descriptive feedback and providing opportunities for peer and self - assessment.</p> <p>Our action research will provide students and teachers with opportunities to incorporate digital technologies (specifically Google Apps for Education) using a Collaborative Inquiry framework to improve student learning and engagement and teacher learning. Teachers and students will investigate how the integration of Google Apps for Education (GAFE), devices such as Chromebooks, laptops, and iPad transforms student learning, instruction and assessment practices. For example, the purpose of one inquiry is to enhance students’ ability to generate and organize their ideas. Cloud-based technologies, such as GAFE, will provide students the opportunity to share their writing with a genuine audience that includes their peers and teachers.</p>
Context	<p><i>Number of students: 275</i></p> <p><i>Number of teachers: 11</i></p> <p><i>Number of schools: 7</i></p> <p><i>Grades/Program: Gr.3-8, Language Arts: Reading and Writing</i></p>
Impact on Students	<p>Student feedback to a peer was a challenge for students. They were not always certain of what to “look-for”. However, with the use of GAFE Google Docs and the Google Classroom, students were keen to give feedback to their peers. With the use of technology, students and teachers could provide immediate feedback and students could act on that feedback to improve their work effortlessly. Students needed only to focus on making improvements using technology so the learning process was much more efficient than re-writing their whole piece of writing.</p> <p>When students are effectively able to give their peers feedback it reflects their understanding of Success Criteria.</p>
Impact on Instruction	<p>Our collaborative inquiry focused on deepening understanding of assessment for learning practices through the effective integration of technology through building collaboration skills between students and teachers.</p> <p>Participants completed a survey at the beginning of the project and at the end of our journey. The SAMR model served as a reference for our collaborative inquiry. At the beginning of our journey, just over half of participants placed themselves at the level of Substitution in terms of how they integrate technology into their</p>

instructional practice, with some identifying themselves at the level of Augmentation and a very small percentage placing themselves at the Redefinition stage. After a period of learning and, teachers re-assessed their journey along the SAMR continuum and there was measureable growth. In this most recent assessment, there were no teacher (0%) that placed themselves at the level of Substitution and over half of participants (55%) placed themselves at the Modification stage of the SAMR model, 33% at modification and 11% at redefinition. This data represents a significant shift in the pedagogical practice of integrating technology of our teachers involved. Over half of our teachers have shifted from using technology to enhance learning to integrating technology to redesign learning opportunities for students. This research initiative has also impacted teacher practice in that teachers are much more reflective and conscious of the research based model of SAMR and its application to the design of learning opportunities.

Over 88% of teachers involved in this innovation research initiative focused on deepening assessment for and as learning practices through the integration of digital technology resources selected 'strongly agree' and 'agree' that involvement in this initiative has had an impact on their teaching practice.

Our Collaborative Inquiry has impacted teacher practice in that teachers are learning collaboratively in the area of assessment for learning and are deepening the quality of descriptive feedback to and between students. This research initiative also has highlighted the importance of teachers working together, developing inquiries, implementing actions and assessing their impact.

[T]eachers reflected on their journey and shared the following impact on their teaching practices based on student learning results:

There was consensus that giving feedback is a necessary component of assessment "for" and "as" learning. At the conclusion of the project, teachers set out to gather evidence that students were actually meeting the overall expectations in writing. Students completed an on-demand writing task that required them to respond to a writing prompt. The results confirmed that with deliberate and well-planned explicit teaching, students can achieve success. It was concluded that teachers who learn and moderate student work together, foster collaborative and independent learning in their classrooms. They build a common understanding of assessment practices, as well as an understanding of what level 3 student work looks like across grade levels or within the same grade level. It was also determined that GAFE played a vital role in improved teachers' instruction enabling collaboration ... to communicate daily and to work together on planning and sharing of documents and student work.

<p>Impact on System</p>	<p>Our board’s journey of the next phase in ‘Learning For All: Taking It To The Cloud’ has provided a rich opportunity to continue to build upon the 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 system wide collaborative inquiry served to form a strong foundation on which to build a sustainable model of teaching and learning. We engaged a total of 15 teachers supported by their principals and three system teachers in a collaborative inquiry focused on assessment for and as learning practices and building collaboration skills through digital technology resources. A strategy to expand our Collaborative Inquiry to include every school and our secondary school will be to plan and facilitate a September 2016 sharing session of all of this year’s collaborative inquiry innovation projects.</p> <p>This initiative has also contributed to our scaling up in our system by continuously building capacity of our educators at the elementary and secondary level to share their instructional and assessment practices enabled with technology [and] served to build capacity of our educators to feel confident in sharing their best practices and learnings with their colleagues. .</p> <p>As a result of our innovation research initiative our system Teaching and Learning Through Technology Committee (TLTC) is developing a renewed plan building on the system vision ... [with a] focus on fostering the following 21st Century learning skills of our students: digital fluency, collaboration, problem solving, communication, critical thinking, creativity and innovation.</p>
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