

Ottawa Carleton District School Board: 2015 - 2016

Project Title	Deeper Learning in Life After Labs
Description	<p>The project will focus on six schools who are participating in the New Pedagogies for Deep Learning (NPDL) project to see how they use technology to leverage deep learning tasks. New Pedagogies for Deep Learning (NPDL) is an international innovation partnership involving students, teachers, administrators, parents and education communities working together to design teaching and learning that leads to greater student engagement. Student progress will be measured against the learning progressions in the NPDL framework (the 6 C's). The six C's (Collaboration, Citizenship, Creativity, Character, Critical Thinking and Communication) are measured against rubrics. Teachers will conduct a self-assessment prior to the project and at the end of the project. This self-assessment measures the teacher's progress in forging learning partnerships with their students, colleagues and the community, creating a learning environment which encourages student voice and choice, using pedagogical practices which foster deep learning, and leveraging digital at the modification and redefinition stages of SAMR. Schools will be given release time to allow for teachers to participate in co-planning of deep learning tasks. Using the collaborative learning cycle they will design, implement, reflect and change and assess their tasks against the rubrics provided on the NPDL Deep Learning Hub (website).</p>
Context	<p><i>Number of students: 2,678</i>  <i>Number of teachers: 102</i>  <i>Number of schools: 6</i>  <i>Grades/Program: Gr.6-8</i></p>
Impact on Students	<p>Through focus group interviews and their participation in the Learning Tasks, students have clearly articulated how they have been impacted. We find that the results have been remarkable given that this is only the first or second year for these students.</p> <p>All students reported that increased access to wireless digital tools in their classroom improved their ability to learn, by providing opportunities for deeper exploration of materials. They could research information at any time, rather than waiting for access to a reference book or a computer lab. Students reported they were focused more on the learning than on the mechanics of writing or creating multiple drafts. The appropriate digital tools made the writing and presentation process more efficient. Students indicated through the interviews and their work that digital tools such as Google Classroom allowed them to collaborate seamlessly on projects, even with students in other classes. Students reported that they were able to concentrate more on the task, knowing that they could easily edit and revise their work.</p>

	<p>Students spoke about how a variety of digital technology also supported the different types of learners in the classroom. This improved both student engagement and achievement by providing a variety of ways that students could approach their learning.</p> <p>In several of the schools the teachers and administrators reported that it is the students who are now beginning to ask questions around their learning, what the expectations are and what opportunities they have to demonstrate their understanding.</p>
<p><b>Impact on Instruction</b></p>	<p>We have seen impact on teacher practice in numerous areas. These have been identified through teacher self-assessment surveys, principal surveys, interviews and the learning tasks.</p> <p>There is evidence of growth toward the development of richer learning tasks that allow for teachers and student to be co-learners and meet curricular expectations through the examination of open-ended questions and problem-solving.</p> <p>In all involved schools there are indications that staff is becoming more confident in working with their students as activators of learning, rather than providers of information and answers. Both staff and principals note that there has been an increase in the acceptance of BYOD, shared, and embedded devices outside of a computer lab in their classrooms. As staff has become more comfortable with Google Apps for Education, they are seeing how they can leverage student engagement with the devices and the opportunities that technology provides to impact student learning. The rich tasks demonstrate how students are being challenged to engage in their learning and collaboration within the classroom and outside its walls. Students and staff have indicated that there is ongoing need to maintain discussions around appropriate use of devices and digital citizenship.</p> <p>Both teachers and students report that technology has also allowed for increased opportunities for teacher to student communication and opportunities for feedback. Student voice and conferencing opportunities (teacher to student, student to student) were important to achieving meaningful learning and shared goals. Teachers have worked together to prepare the rich learning opportunities for their students. After participating in the process of creating and employing the deep learning tasks with their students, it is evident in the task reports that teachers are reflecting on the positives and negatives of the experiences and are identifying next steps for continued work next year.</p>
<p><b>Impact on System</b></p>	<p>While the focus of this project has been concentrated within six school sites, lessons learned are being shared system wide. As part of an initiative that was begun several years ago, each school within the OCDSB designates a staff member to be a Digital Learning Advisor. These DLAs have become advocates for the integration of technology in support of deep learning in every school. They</p>

have also strengthened two-way communication between the schools and central staff. The DLAs are becoming the champions of technology enabled practices within their school thus providing opportunities for increased staff learning and collaboration. The DLA meetings have also strengthened communication between schools and central staff. This has begun to impact how coaching is provided in the schools and has resulted in connections and collaborations being made between staff, both within schools and between schools.

All schools in the district are shifting to having a variety of digital devices and tools that are available in the classroom. An increasing number of schools and classrooms are allowing students to bring their own devices. District coaches continue to support teachers in leveraging mobile devices to accelerate learning and engagement in the classroom. Elementary schools that are currently under construction have been designed as buildings with collaborative work spaces, shared commons areas and in-class technology.