2017-18 ETAC Technology Pilots

ETAC Technology Pilots provide teachers the opportunity to determine if advances in specific new education technologies makes significant pedagogical differences in their teachings. These findings provide a resource bank of feedback on technology that will support the infusion of instructional technology throughout LRSD.

Wireless Charger

This year we attempted to place a wireless charging station, 2 iphone chargers, 4 general android chargers with charging USB ports in a grade 7 classroom to accommodate BYOD and student cell phones. The station provided an alternate location to place their cell phones when not needed during class instruction. Students were able to see the phone at all times however, was not in an easily accessible location. This strategy was effective for promoting digital citizenship, on task behaviour and mental wellness. Students appreciated the opportunity to charge their phones and the teacher found this to be an effective classroom management strategy. More research will be required for final approval of this technology.

Cardboard Makerspace Tub

A maker tub is a collection of cardboard joiners that was created to assist a Grade 3 class with engagement in the maker movement with simply cardboard and fasteners. The kit included cardboard saws, cardboard screws, screwdrivers, tube joints, hinges, stacking flaps and cardboard hole punch. Students used the material to create artifacts in which they designed and tested. The goal of the kit was to promote a makerspace opportunity for students in grade three using common materials. Students were able to create and build artifacts using the items from the box with ease however students often wanted to take the product home which cannot happen with the parts from the tub as they are meant to be reused over and over again. This technology is recommended by ETAC for use as a tool for Makerspace.

Chromebook Classroom access Model

The goal of this pilot was to determine the number of chromebooks needed to provide acceptable access to students in a classroom. We provided 10 touchscreen chromebooks that were stored in a Grade 5 classroom to determine if students had better access than they would with a cart .

We found that the students used the devices more often for personal inquiry and that information was found quickly. There was an increase of students using the devices for assistive technology and a seamless transition from high tech to low tech. Collaboration increased with the Google Apps platform and ease of access to chromebooks. This pilot demonstrated that chromebooks residing in classrooms is a viable strategy for access, more research is needed to determine the perfect number.

Virtual Reality Machine

A VR machine was purchased and placed in a Learning commons to determine the validity of this technology in school to support student learning. Students were engaged with using the machine to participate in virtual reality activities. Having only one machine became a barrier as only one student could participate at one time. ETAC determined the educational value of the device was in the creation of content that could be displayed on the device. More understanding of the technical aspects of creating content is needed to enable effective use of the VR machine. ETAC will continue the pilot for another year before a recommendation is given.

OSMO Coding Kit and Ozobots

A coding kit was placed in a Kindergarten classroom assist teach logic skills and problem solving, and help students in an early learning environment to code digitally. The kit works with the IPad and simple robots to introduce students to coding. Ozobots are small robots that can be programed using simple coding kits to do simple functions. The Ozobots were used to enhance the coding that was taking place in the class. Students were successful in coding both OSMO and Ozobots and demonstrated high engagement and competency attainment. Etac is recommending these tools for the early learning environment.

Digital Portfolio

A Digital Portfolio is as a type of learning record that provides actual evidence of achievement. Learning records are closely related to the outcomes taught in class. Digital Portfolios are an emerging tool which schools use to manage and display learning

Digital Portfolios, like traditional portfolios, can facilitate students' reflection on their own learning, leading to more awareness of learning strategies and needs. LRSD piloted **a digital portfolio** for a second year..

The purpose of the pilot is to facilitate the opportunity for students to demonstrate their learning while providing access to the students parents and to determine if a digital portfolio could serve as a reporting tool. This software allows teachers to differentiate instruction, becoming more student centred. Teachers and students can upload evidence of learning approved by the teacher which is shared to stakeholders in a secure environment.

Staff felt that the barriers involved the technical issues with the tablet device available in the classroom and the report card produced was in beta.

The greatest benefit of the software was student engagement and authentic reflection of one's own learning. The software increased communication to parents and students were engaged in using it. LRSD will pilot the software for another year with a grade 1 and grade 2 class before providing a recommendation.

EBooks

With the support of the learning commons facilitators, an ebook subscription was purchased division wide for any students in LRSD. Ebooks allowed student access at any time through a web browser or by downloading the book for a period of time. Some barriers included availability of certain books due to popularity and technical issues with devices. Learning Commons facilitators believed the open access enriched a students literacy experience and increased the variety of books available to the students. ETAC agreed to pilot this subscription for one more year before presenting to Admin Council for divisional subscription approval.