Facilitating Literacy Through Technology in the Secondary Setting

J.L. Crowe Secondary School
Project Goals

• To provide access to technologies that support students who struggle with written output

• To assist students who are struggling readers to independently access resources that can assist them in comprehending material
Resources & Team

STAFF:
• 2 English Dept. Heads
• Learning Assistance/Student Support Teacher
• IT Manager
• Assistive Technology Helping Teacher
• SET-BC reps

EQUIPMENT:
• 4 Laptops with chargers and cases
• 4 Ipads with chargers and keyboards
• Filing Cabinet (with keys to lock)
• 2 power bars
• Sign out sheet

APPS OR PROGRAMS USED:
• Reading: Firefly, MP3 audio files (QuickTime), Rewordify, Google Books
• Writing: Inspiration, Dictation (accessibility settings)
• Other: Google Drive/Play, Edmodo
• BC Public Library – Media Overdrive (audio books)
Project Scope

Who:
- Open to all Grade 8 & 9 English students
- Purposefully targeted department heads’ classes to get buy-in at teacher level
- Struggling readers/writers

When:
- Tuesdays and Thursday during C-block (Gr. 8 Eng.)
- Monday-Thursday during D-Block (Gr. 9 Eng.)

Where:
- Classroom based initiative
- No singling out students of with LDs
Activities/Themes (WHAT):

- Dictation for essay writing/spelling using accessibility settings on Ipads/laptops
  - Remember the Titans Comparison Essay
  - Ways of Life Essay – Copper Sunrise
  - Poetry Booklets
  - Test taking (written responses)
- Rewordify to reduce language level of text (when available on pdf/internet)
- Google Books/Play and QuickTime audio files for reading the Beckoners novel Study
- Firefly and YouTube audio files for the Outsider novel study and for reading text passages for tests
Project Scope

• How:
  • Met with teachers at beginning of semester to talk about units that might be good opportunities to springboard technology.
  • Discussed with teachers what technology they wanted to try.
  • Met weekly with English teachers to specifically plan how to integrate technology for activities going on that week
  • Support teacher came in to do training sessions both classwide (for dictation) and supported small groups of students in the classroom choosing to use technology.
  • Support teacher sourced different formats for novel studies and provided each teacher with options
Project Challenges

- Finding time for planning team teaching of activities
- Getting students to sign the consent form
- Late arrival of technology
- Ipads were not as useful as laptops (no Word, Google Drive access issues, not able to print, licensing issues for apps/cost)
- Different training needs that anticipated
- Support teacher schedule sometimes conflicted and couldn’t always be in to support.
Successes

• Students are requesting technology on their own
• Students who struggle to put pen to paper are showing increases in written output
• Technology is being utilized on a daily basis
• Some students choosing to dictate answers for tests and to write essays
• Students are learning how to use accessibility features their own technology
• Students can now access reading materials in a variety of ways
• Students can use Rewordify to differentiate reading levels of materials
• We didn’t lose any equipment
• Learned a lot about the different formats available to read novels
• When school computer labs weren’t available, teachers still had back-up access to technology
Outcomes for Teachers

PLANNED:

- Increased level of proficiency developed in the areas of technology.
- Improved integration of technology into curriculum for both instruction and assessment.
- Increased ability to individualize programming.

ACTUAL:

- 2 teachers can set up dictation for students independently.
- 3 Teachers now know how to post audiofiles into Edmodo for all students to access.
- 3 Teachers posted audio files for novel studies.
- 2 Teachers using Google Docs for students to provide feedback.
- Teachers now giving students a choice to either dictate or write responses for both essays and tests.
Outcomes for Students

**PLANNED:**
- Students will access and use various writing applications
- Students will be able to use technology to edit their writing
- Students will be able to use technology to improve their reading comprehension
- Students will be able to use technology to express themselves orally.
- Increased requests and utilization of technology
- Increased scores of writing and reading assessments/rubrics.

**ACTUAL:**
- 1 student uses Speak-it to proof-read
- 4 students use Google Docs to edit their written work with teachers
- 5 Students using Firefly to read novels/tests
- 3 students using Rewordify to simplify reading material
- 7 Students using dictation consistently to write
- 2 Students using dictation for test test taking
- Approx. 20 students. month signing out technology to complete work (huge underestimate)
Student Work Samples

- https://voicethread.com/myvoice/#thread/7929656/43484539/44309724
Reflections for Next Time…

- Smaller scope (pick one goal and do it well)
- Laptops are more useful
- Ipad Printer would be helpful
- Use DocuSign to get consent forms signed by parents
- Set aside regular collaboration times with teachers and make arrangements to free them up at the beginning of the project
- Schedule resource teacher’s time to align with English teachers prep/teaching time
- Provide more training for students on using specific features of apps as formats they are used to using look different on Ipads.
- Need to get more training on Inspiration to better our understanding of its capabilities
- For Ipads – chargers with double USB input (can charge keyboard and Ipad at same time) a must