

## 1. Project Description

Describe/show to what degree the project was carried out as planned. Include what went well and what proved to be a challenge. Include a synthesis of your journal entries.

PDIG 14062 was carried out 90% as planned. The Coordinator and Teacher Coaches met monthly to collect feedback and establish goals for the respective schools. During each meeting, The Coordinator presented research based interventions for creating trauma sensitive schools, Coaches shared initiatives within their respective schools, and at times, classroom teachers joined our meetings to share examples of activities they created and implemented, to support student understanding of Executive Function skills and strategies for strengthening such skills.

At times, the coordinator and coaches had difficulty changing the mindset of some staff members. Only a very small percentage of teachers feel that, despite the research, punitive rather than restorative strategies, are more effective when faced with challenging student behavior.

Another challenge was teacher turnover. For reasons such as pregnancy or long term illness, the project participants often changed. As a result, we did not use all the granted release dates.

## 2. Project Goals

Describe/show to what degree the goals of the approved project were met. If the goals were only partially met or not met at all, describe the reasons for this.

Strategic goal 1 "Act as visionary and strategic body that advises and influences decisions regarding education in Quebec" was carried out in the following way: The network of teachers, referred to as "Trauma Informed Coaches" from low socioeconomic areas schools played a fundamental role in the systematic implementation of school-wide trauma sensitive initiatives and pedagogical practices. In order to provide support for students, one teacher was appointed as a trauma informed Coach in each of the 5 inner-city schools. The project Coordinator, an itinerant teacher, provided support to the teacher Coaches in the implementation of school wide trauma informed strategies. The Coordinator' role is to advise, develop plans and implement strategies based on the the needs described by the Coach. At times the Coordinator and Coaches meet with classroom teachers to discuss individual classroom/student observations and strategies for meeting student needs. - I am very pleased to relay that this goal was met 100%!

Strategic Goal 2: "Advocate for the timely delivery of quality educational resources and support for the English sector" The creation of a network of teachers representing

our 5 most disadvantaged schools has served to identify the need to create a student observation grid to assess the deficits in executive function skills. Despite being aware of the E.F. skills framework, teachers remain unclear of the relationship with adverse childhood experiences and how this impedes learning. Teacher Coaches will provide support through student observations, team teaching/modelling of strategies to address the needs identified through student observations, and individual teacher meetings. Our goals in this PDIG are: 1) \* To develop a grid to identify student executive function skill deficits. 2) \* Based on the student observations, the network will create a bank of strategies and resources to address and support their student needs. 3)\*To provide professional development for teachers that will sensitize them to the effects of trauma on the development of executive skills. -This goal has been met as both the Project Coordinator and teacher coaches as they model and team-teach alongside classroom teachers to identify Executive Function deficits and strategies that address skill building capacity.

Strategic Goal 3 "To support professional development to meet the needs of the English Educational Community": through our partnership with NANS, Une Ecole Montrealaise Pour Tous (UEMPT), and Reunir Reussir (R2) will allow for share expertise and serve to develop professional development workshops for all teacher in low-socio economic area schools. This information can be shared across the province with administrators, teachers and professionals. -This goal was also met at 100%. During the school year, Three 5 hour workshops were given by the Project Coordinator in collaboration with Nancy Salterelli through Ecole Montrealaise.

The support and guidance of Dr. Delphine Collins Vezina, a licensed clinical psychologist, Tier II Canada Research Chair in Child Welfare, Associate Professor in the McGill School of Social Work, was enlisted. Dr. Collins Vezina will act as a guide as we draw strategies from the ARC (Attachment, Regulation and Competence) model of intervention. We anticipate that all teachers involved with this project will enhance their practice by intentionally targeting support for self regulation and task executive skills. -At the beginning of the school year, Dr. Collins Vezina provided support under the guidance of her PhD student Jacqui Liljequist. Jacqui met with the Coordinator and teacher Coaches and provided a workshop on October 6th to all 5 participating schools.

### **3. Project Outcomes**

Describe/show the gains that the participating teachers achieved through this project.

-First and foremost, strong connections were built across the 5 schools through the

teacher network. Team teaching and modelling of best practices by the coaches and coordinator were not only welcomed, but highly sought out by classroom teachers. As a result, a strong sense of school community, resilience and shared vision was developed.

-Common practices were established and modelled across the 5 schools. Practices such as 1) The Zones of Regulation, 2) Classroom Meetings, 3) Positive Discourse and Growth Mindset 4) Mindfulness Practices

-Materials put in place: 1) Social Emotional Learning Library Resource., 2) EF skills reference document., 3) Teacher created materials shared on Google Drive, such as checklists and visual supports

-Future Vision: The adoption of Restorative Discipline Practices as a means of addressing problematic behavior

#### **4. Reinvestment**

Clearly describe how the resources created and/or the learning achieved by the participants can be of benefit to the educational community at large.

The allocated release time allowed the team to discuss and follow through on goals, set intentions, and plan for action. As a result, a sound model for integrating social emotional strategies into the regular teaching practice has been established. Throughout this PDIG, and with the support of PDIG 5065, PDIG 5372 and PDIG 5659, a great number of teachers have gained significant insight for teaching students who are affected by chronic stress and numerous resources have been created. Empowered by research and practice, our model is one that can be of benefit to the educational community at large.

#### **5. Final Report**

PDIG 14062 addresses the particular needs of students living with chronic stress due the impact poverty has on the family unit. Teachers working in low-socio economic areas require additional understanding of how poverty impacts learning in order to meet the needs of their students. This project aims at providing continued support to the existing teacher network previously established in PDIGs 5065, 5372 and 5659, to develop and implement strategies which address the Executive Function needs of our clientele.

This approach allows for the establishment of a collective school wide climate change through collaboration with identified "teacher coaches" who offer support in the form of team teaching and modelling of trauma informed practices. Throughout the project, all 3 strategic goals of the LCEEQ were addressed.

Strategic goal 1 "Act as visionary and strategic body that advises and influences decisions regarding education in Quebec" was carried out in the following way: A network of 5 teachers from 5 low socioeconomic areas schools, referred to as "Trauma Informed Teacher Coaches", met regularly to discuss the systematic implementation of school-wide trauma sensitive initiatives and pedagogical practices to support students at the elementary level.

Despite being aware of the the harsh reality our students face as a result of poverty, teachers' understanding remains unclear regarding the correlation between adverse childhood experiences and learning difficulties. Teacher Coaches provide support through student observations, team teaching/modelling of strategies to address the needs identified through student observations, and individual teacher meetings.

The project Coordinator, an itinerant "trauma Informed" teacher specialist, supported the Teacher Coaches in the implementation of school wide trauma informed strategies. The Coordinator advises, develops plans and offers strategies based on the the student's needs as described by the Coach. At times the Coordinator and Coaches meet with classroom teachers to carry out classroom/student observations and discuss strategies for meeting student needs.

Strategic Goal 2: "Advocate for the timely delivery of quality educational resources and support for the English sector". A wealth of resources and best practices were adopted and refined throughout the course of the school year.

The Coordinator developed an Executive Function Skills reference document which was reviewed and refined in collaboration with teacher coaches. The Executive Function skills reference list can be found in the attachments below. The purpose of this document is to guide classroom teachers as they assess their student's performance during the execution of daily academic tasks. Student discussion activity sheets were also created to engage students in understanding what is needed to successfully accomplish a task. Here students discuss as a group targeted executive skills and brainstorm reasons why certain skills may be difficult to manage and come up with strategies for addressing solutions for meeting the academic demands.

In addition to this reference, the teacher network created a bank of strategies and techniques to assist teachers in addressing executive function deficits and support their

student's needs. Common practices were established and modelled across the 5 schools. Practices such as 1) The Zones of Regulation, 2) Classroom Meetings, 3) Positive Discourse and Growth Mindset 4) Mindfulness Practices. Additional resources such as a Social Emotional Learning section located in the school library, as well as a bank of teacher created materials that are shared on Google Drive.

Another goal of this PDIG was to create opportunities for professional development that will sensitize teachers to the effects of trauma on the development of executive skills . This goal was achieved as both the Project Coordinator and teacher coaches “team- taught” alongside classroom teachers as they identify how weaknesses in skills such as emotional regulation and task execution interrupt academic progress. The observation and identification of unrefined executive skills supported teachers’ understanding of the selected skill building strategies.

Team teaching and modelling of best practices by the coaches and coordinator were not only welcomed, but highly sought out by classroom teachers. As a result, teacher stress was reduced as they not only gained insight as to why their students were struggling, but also built strong connections across the 5 Ecole Montrealaise schools. Each individual school reported feeling an increased sense of school community as a shared vision was developed.

In addition to the above learning opportunities, two larger scale workshops were provided as a means of meeting Strategic Goal #3 "To support professional development to meet the needs of the English Educational Community".

1) During the school year, three 5 hour workshops were given by the Project Coordinator in collaboration with Nancy Salterelli through Ecole Montrealaise. During the workshops, the Project Coordinator shared her expertise with 45 teachers working in low-socio economic area schools from both EMSB and LBPSB.

2) Under the guidance of Dr. Delphine Collins Vezina (a licensed clinical psychologist, Tier II Canada Research Chair in Child Welfare, Associate Professor in the McGill School of Social Work) supported our project as her PhD student Jacqui Liljequist provided a 3 hour workshop on October 6th for all teachers within the 5 LBPSB Ecole Montrealaise supported schools. Jacqui presented strategies from the ARC “Attachment, Regulation and Competence” Model of intervention developed by Dr. Margaret Blaustein.

This project has greatly impacted the way teachers design and deliver their lessons to meet their students specific social and academic needs. As a result of being granted release time to discuss goals, set intentions and follow through on the project's objectives, a sound model for integrating social emotional strategies into the regular teaching practice was established. Throughout this PDIG, teachers have gained significant insight, adopted effective strategies, and created numerous resources, for teaching students who are affected by chronic stress. This information can be shared across the province with administrators, teachers and professionals. Empowered by research and practice, our model is one that can be of benefit to the educational community at large.