Westpark UDL Classroom
Final Report

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Introduction

This project is all about creating lessons that incorporate the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach. The goals of a UDL classroom are to provide multiple means of engagement (purposeful motivated learners), representation (resourceful, knowledgeable learners) and action and expression (strategic, goal-directed learners) (*udlcenter.org, 2017*). This means changes to our teaching styles and materials as well as additional resources. Since there are few resources available in French with this type of approach, we felt the need to create a variety of lessons to be used going forward. Up to and including this year, we have used the Alphabétik program (ERPI) to guide our French program. However, we have found that, since this is geared towards French-language learners as opposed to second language or immersion learners, it was not meeting our students' needs.

Project Description

We had originally planned to create a bank of lessons that we could implement in our classrooms and adjust them throughout the school year. We found that the time required to create the wide variety of materials needed to meet all levels of learners (below-level, at-level and above-level students) was greater than we had anticipated. As such, we were only able to implement some of the activities/lessons. However, we were very successful in creating a solid bank of SAE (Situation d'apprentissage et d'évaluation) lessons, activities and learning opportunities. Also, we had originally planned to make our own student grammar workbook based on the grammar expectations for second-language learners in Grade 2. After meeting with Heather-Anne Denton, the French Language Consultant for LBPSB, and discussing as a team, we did not feel that this type of workbook would be beneficial for a UDL approach. Therefore, we decided to create interactive student-based lessons/activities covering the required concepts in Grade 2 to improve their writing as opposed to memorizing rules. Creating grammar lessons was more time consuming than creating a grammar workbook, but we believe that this was very important and will better benefit our students.

We wanted to have a more cohesive Grade level approach to homework that reflected the goals of our teaching, which included levelled homework. Following our Grade 3 colleagues approach, we decided to create a new shared homework website that included homework at different reading levels to address and target students' needs.

After our initial meeting as a team and our meeting with Heather-Anne Denton, we changed the focus for each day. We also decided that it would be more productive to spread the days out by working in pairs instead of all four at the same time. This also allowed us to build some of the materials between PDIG days. See below how our plan came together.

Day 1 (4 teachers)

We met as a team to discuss the concept of UDL and what it would look like in our classrooms. We planned the format for homework and made a list of the grammar concepts required for the Grade 2 French Immersion program. We then made a list of types of reading and writing activities that would target different learning styles (tactile, visual, auditory, etc.). We also decided that we would continue to implement the Daily 5 and CAFÉ strategies.

Day 2 (2 teachers)

This day focused on reading activities. We went through our individual and shared materials in order to decide which could be shared/used and which would need to be purchased in multiple copies (to respect copyright law) and finalized which activities would be used in class vs. for homework.

Day 3 (4 teachers)

We met with Heather-Anne Denton and finalized our list of grammar concepts. We then decided not to have a grammar workbook, but to develop interactive lessons instead. We went through our chosen materials and found appropriate texts at different reading levels to be used from September through June. These reading activities were leveled based on student abilities to ensure that each student finds success and progresses accordingly. Heather-Anne told us about the "phrase-élastique", which we were able to implement immediately.

Day 4 (4 teachers AM, 2 teacher PM)

We went through the chosen texts for the homework website and edited them to add definitions, images, etc to help with comprehension. We created content for the in-class reading comprehension "atelier". We found and inserted writing prompts for both the homework and in-class work.

Day 5 (2 teachers)

This day focused on writing. We had previously developed and had implemented some writing activities from a previous PDIG, which we used to build off-of. As we realized that everything was taking longer than expected, we also took the time to prioritize which activities needed to be completed first in order to fully complete the program.

Day 6 (2 teachers)

This day focused on developing our bank of lessons for teaching grammar. We created lessons that reached a variety of learning styles while still following the Grade 2 French Immersion curriculum. We will be evaluating students based on their ability to apply concepts in their writing, while moving away from traditional grammar worksheets and tests.

Day 7 (2 teachers)

This day focused on continuing to develop the grammar lessons as well as designing and uploading materials to our new homework website. We also decided to have a teacher website where we would upload all of our materials for teacher and Smart Board/in-class use.

Day 8 (4 teachers)

This day focused on the finalization of the creation of all of our materials as well as discussing what our new weekly teaching schedule would look like without French workbooks. We had parent volunteers come in to copy, cut, laminate, staple, etc. all materials for the four Grade 2 classes.

Day 9 (2 teachers PM only)

We used this day to discuss the overall process of the PDIG and evaluate its effectiveness as well as finalize and write our report.

Project Goals

Our main goal for this project was to create a French program, based on the UDL approach, that will reach all types of learners. We wanted to provide learning opportunities that allowed students to collaborate and create together while still offering a variety of materials/lessons. We also wanted to implement these lessons in our classrooms in order to assess and evaluate their effectiveness.

As mentioned earlier, we decided to move away from a French grammar workbook and create a bank of lessons to teach the concepts in a variety of ways. This was much more time consuming than we had anticipated, as was the creation of our reading and writing materials. As such, we were unable to implement all of our lessons and materials in this school year. We were successful in implementing the "phrase-élastique" as well as some of the grammar lessons, but not as much as we had originally planned. That being said, we were very successful in creating the materials which will be ready for use in the 2018-2019 school year.

We still have quite a bit of preparation work left to do over the summer, but we made sure that our Term 1 materials are all ready to go for September.

Our homework website (for student/parent use) can be found here (under construction):
http://westpark2.weebly.com

Our in-class website (for teacher use) can be found here (under construction):
https://profswestpark2.weebly.com/

We will continuously be adding materials over the course of the last few weeks of school as well as over the summer.

Materials Created (In-Class Use)

1. Bank of Grammar lessons (see Journal entries)

2. French Writing Activities
    a. Je peux écrire (une liste, une recette, une histoire, une lettre, une carte postale, un blog)
    b. Le journal (ma fin de semaine, sujet libre, sujet guidé)
    c. Les phrases (écrire des phrases avec les mots de la semaine)
    d. La phrase élastique, d'images en mots (images and gifs with writing prompts)
    e. Tic-Tac-Mot (story starters in the form of a tic-tac-toe sheet)
    ** For all these activities, students will be using their colour-coded self-correct system (bleu = majuscule et point, jaune = pluriel, vert = mots de dictée, rose = leçons de classe)*

3. French Leveled Reading Activities
    a. Les colorie-textes (read a story and colour/draw on the corresponding image to match)
    b. Les petits livrets (read a small book and respond to short retrieval questions as well as opinion questions)
    c. Compréhension de lecture (traditional comprehension texts where we teach strategies for how to respond to questions and understand texts)
    d. Les cartes textes (colourful cards with texts and images and questions)
    e. Les devinettes (short texts with images to match)
    **For all these activities, texts will be levelled based on students' abilities. These will be independent activities that will also be self-correct, other than point c, which will be guided in order to develop reading comprehension strategies.*

Materials Created (Homework Website)

1. Mes outils - Français: All French concepts that have been taught in class will be posted here for students to refer to at home when working on their homework. This will also be useful for the parents so that they can better support their children.

2. French Writing Activities
    a. Sep-Oct: D'images en mots (images and gifs with writing prompts)
    b. Nov: Tic-Tac-Mots (story starters in the form of a tic-tac-toe sheet)
    c. Dec: Letter Writing (teach students how to write a letter in class, they write a letter for homework)

    d. Jan: D'images en mots
    e. Feb: Acrostic Poem (teach students how to write an acrostic poem in class, they make one for homework)
    f. Mar: Emotions (have emojis with prompts)
    g. Apr: Tic-Tac-Mots
    h. May: How to Write Instructions (recipe, game rules, explain an activity, sports rules)
    i. Jun: D'images en mots

3. French Levelled Reading Activities: Variety of choices of texts posted per term (6-8 choices per level). Texts have been edited and formatted to suit students' needs and abilities.

Project Outcomes

The goal of this UDL approach to teaching was to allow educators to effectively and comfortably use various technological tools, programs and concepts to ensure that learning continues outside of the classroom environment while reaching all learners and embodying full student engagement. We are all very excited to put our lessons into action in the 2018-2019 school year (as we did not have time to implement it all this year).

Teachers have:
- developed an expertise in UDL to support their students' learning
- effectively looked for and created a list of resources
- developed a bank of lessons in French using the UDL guidelines
- prepared themselves to engage students to be active learners
- developed skills to help students become lifelong learners by understanding their own learning styles and needs
- developed teaching material so that all students within a classroom can learn effectively, regardless of differences in ability.

Reinvestment

Since our school board is moving towards a Deep Learning approach, these lessons and activities will help our colleagues become more comfortable with UDL (vs traditional textbook based teaching). This will also help prepare our students to become lifelong

learners and take initiative in their learning, which will benefit our educational community as a whole.

We plan to share our learning with our colleagues in August of next year and will support anyone interested in embracing a UDL approach to teaching. We will also work with our Grade 3 French teaching colleagues next year to support one another in our teaching (as both grades are implementing UDL).

If our colleagues are interested in applying for a PDIG to develop similar lessons and activities for their grade levels, we would recommend that they attend workshops on UDL, Deep Learning, 6 C's, Daily 5 and Café, that they start small (choose one subject area, ie French) and build their way up (covering other subject areas, ie Math, Social studies, etc.) and that they seek out other staff members who have implemented or started implementing this approach to have a starting point to build off of. This last point would also help alleviate the pressure of starting from scratch.