

PDIG Final Report – WOTP PRACTICUM  
2020-2021  
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### **Project description**

Our project was partially carried out as planned. The meetings held were successful and productive. As planned, we were able to unite and collaborate as school WOTP teams. The project included representatives from Joliette High School, Lake of Two Mountains High School, St Agathe High School and Laval Senior Academy. The first three meeting dates were held online through TEAM.

The first meeting had to be offered on two different meeting dates. Not all teacher and staff members were able to meet one any given day to start the project process. Therefore a few met for Day 1 on 29 October (2 members) and a 4 met on 04 Nov 2021.

The first 2 meetings were planning and work meetings. The meeting leader, Genevieve Ducharme presented the project goals and proposed tasks and timeline for execution and measurable criteria for success. Members were able to comment on, make suggestions to edit, which they did so that all members were consulted and felt like they were part of the building process from day 1.

Overall, what went well was online collaboration. Continuous work on the initial stages of creating an online working environment through Teams. Team members could work on their own time and collaborate with one another. This aspect was an advantage despite not being able to meet and work synchronously. Some team members reported being new to the TEAMS environment and enjoyed learning about it through the need to collaborate.

The main challenge was the scarcity of substitute teachers to replace teachers to attend the PDIG planning days.

### **Project Goals**

Our main goal was to mobilize school teams to work collaboratively to recruit and retain a wider range of practicum partnerships. For this to happen much had to be done to prepare for canvassing by school teams members (teachers and behavior technicians serving the WOTP programs). There is evidence this background work was done. We now have a MS TEAMS work environment which all participating schools have access to. We have a visiting card for teachers to use for canvassing. We also have a partly completed webpage, with tabs for specific audiences. The main goal was to have a webpage for partners. The English version is published, and the French language version is under construction. The webpage creation also led us to determine the page should also include tabs for student/families, for school administrators. The TEAMS workspace contains all project documentation and created documents and remains active and available to team members.

Although the workspace webpage and visiting card are complete and keep being used and updated, the canvassing component of this project was not as successful due to the lack of substitute teachers and due to the limited ability to visit partners due to changing COVID restrictions. Potential partners were reluctant to meet our team members and furthermore were occasionally reluctant to take on stagiaires for practicum. Most potential partners stated COVID 19 restrictions and regulations were the reason they were reluctant or unable to meet team members or consider taking on stagiaires in the workplace.

### **Project outcomes**

Teachers reported enjoying and learning about the program strategies from their peers in other schools. WOTP teachers in smaller schools often work alone or with very few school staff members. They enjoyed being able to connect with other teachers living the same experiences and challenges. Providing this network was a success. Many team members had never met prior to the project. I believe the network was beneficial for teacher well-being over many schools.

The project also enables us to create a collaborative work joining several of our WOTP school programs and there is room for growth. Other schools and new WOTP school teams can also join this space in the coming years. It is extremely beneficial for teacher to be part of a community of practice such as this one.

Although we did not accumulate as many new partnerships due to the challenging COVID restrictions and the toll it took on teacher's energy levels, we have accomplished the building of a community for WOTP teachers within our regions and schools. In the future, the data table we created should be tools used to measure the success of our project.

### **Reinvestment**

This project has great potential to carry forward in the future. It will be essential for a motivated leader and facilitator to carry the momentum, created. The goal of this project, in the end, is to ensure stimulating and interest-based practicum environments for our WOTP students across our regions and schools. Teachers need support and time to establish these partnerships. They also need to be part of a community of practice to share strategies, challenges and successes in establishing and, maintaining these partnerships with local enterprises, stores and companies. This is part of their responsibilities as teachers in the WOTP program but is not a pedagogical skill. It is more of a marketing and public relations task, so support is needed and welcome to accomplish these tasks successfully. Partners and the school community benefit from a growing number of successful and lasting partnerships. Students are enabled and empowered by developing skills and becoming employable in an environment suited to their abilities and interests. These successful lasting partnerships also lead to new trained employees for local businesses. Success in partnerships also serves to promote the WOTP program in all our schools and regions.

Finally, teachers benefit from the community created by this project. Teacher well-being and retention is a constant preoccupation, and the stress caused by the ongoing pandemic is taking

its toll on teachers. Any initiative that fosters collaboration, teamwork, networking should be maintained to support teachers, especially teacher of WOTP programs who work tirelessly with challenging behaviors and a wide variety of student needs and abilities and engagement levels. Small successes in this project need to be celebrated and shared so that there is continued teacher engagement and enthusiasm.

It has been a pleasure leading this project, and it is my hope that the partnership and network created carries forward in the future for the benefit of all our schools and communities.

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