

Final Report:
Accessibility for All by All: Building Teacher Capacity to Enhance Student Success



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.

We succeeded in creating three Ped Days on the topic of accessibility as we had set out to do in our project description.

The 2022-23 project was launched by clarifying our goals and establishing a plan for our January 9, 2023 Ped Day. After surveying teachers, we came up with the idea of how we can create more welcoming classrooms and incorporate more inclusive practices at the beginning of a new session. Based on teacher feedback we knew this approach would be meaningful, actionable and relevant. The workshop expanded to include different teachers demonstrating specific inclusive strategies that had proven successful for them in the past.

We evaluated the success of the day and helped determine the course of our action by careful consideration of the participant feedback form from the January 9 Ped Day. Based on teacher feedback, we selected the top 4 accessibility topics:

- 1) Assistive technology/classroom adaptation for exams
- 2) Google classroom: Leveling up!
- 3) Peaceful Learning Circles
- 4) Digital Engagement Tools

The conference-style workshop was created so that teachers could select their top two choices from the list of 4 and rotate through two 45 minute sessions. The sessions were developed by the PDIG team as well as by other teachers who expressed interest in taking part in the structure of the day. People worked collaboratively to develop and design their respective workshops for the February 17 Ped Day.

Each group created slides which we shared with all participants so that everyone could benefit from all the mini-sessions provided on February 17, not just the ones they had signed up for.

As we regrouped to design our final Ped Day of the year, the decision was made to bring a new perspective and broader expertise into the creation of the day. In this way, the PDIG members could gain new knowledge of the subject area along with the rest of the staff. The decision was made to invite Salima Kassam, the Toronto District School Board's centrally assigned principal for equity, anti-racism and anti-oppression, to work with us on our final Ped Day. Salima presented a slideshow entitled Creating Conditions for Equitable and Anti-Oppressive Learning at our April 2 Ped Day. We established 6 classrooms to which participants were randomly

assigned based on their choice of notebook at the initial gathering. The 6 classrooms served as in-person breakout groups which were facilitated by individual members of the PDIG team.

Some of the challenges of the PDIG included sustaining the project over multiple years when the summer break disrupts the continuity, and new staff members are brought on to join the project. New members also joined the team which necessitates onboarding and establishing trust in the newly updated team. Furthermore, we are sustaining a project at a time when there is some political pushback globally with respect to certain aspects of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, but we remain undeterred and, in the interests of our students and staff, are determined to move forward.

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.

Our intention was to build on the success of last year's PDIG by taking a deeper dive into accessibility and exploring what we are currently doing to meet the needs of our students and how we can improve our services. Our PDIG team met 6 times to co-construct a Cartier-based approach to accessibility, characterized by our desire to incorporate CRRP, Blended Learning, and Assistive Technology. The team did share the framework and sought insight into its development at 3 centre-level ped. days, which included team-building activities, brainstorming, and presentations by guest speakers.

Break down of goals met:

Goals:

- Took an inventory of what we are already doing to establish a culture of accessibility in our centre. More specifically, we created an inventory of strategies, methods, and initiatives already used at Cartier.
- Began to identify concrete training opportunities and project ideas that we could undertake throughout the year to hone our approach to accessibility. The PDIG team created a survey to inquire about the needs of the staff for training in regards to accessibility.
- Established norms for our future day prep. meetings. Decided how to save/track training. The PDIG team determined that we would continue to save and track professional development resources via our Place Cartier website so teachers can access the material and resources at their convenience.
- Created a mini-conference with multiple guest speakers and activities in which staff could select which speakers to hear and activities in which to participate.
- Developed and shared culturally relevant and responsive teaching materials.
- Demonstrated a deeper understanding of the principles of blended learning and how they are applied effectively in the classroom. This was assessed through follow-up google form questionnaires after the relevant Ped Day.

- Enhanced teacher capacity to understand and utilize the accessibility tools available. This was assessed through a google form survey.
- Ensured that more students receive the accommodations they are entitled to across the curriculum. Teachers have increasingly shared with Resource the names of students who struggled. The resource team meets twice a month and there has been a documented increase in student cases.
- Created a final survey for staff to assess changes in their understanding of the issues that we have grappled with throughout the year.

3. Project Outcomes:

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

We polled staff to discover their current familiarity with and understanding of accessibility and culturally relevant teaching and gained important insights into our staff's current knowledge and interests in these areas.

We added our customized workshops and resources to the Place Cartier website so that staff have access to readily available PD that they can explore at their own pace.

We observed that the PDIG team and our staff as a whole developed a deeper appreciation of the relevance of cross curricular competencies, particularly in areas concerned with equity, accessibility, and culturally relevant teaching -- and incorporated these into their classroom practice.

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. Make sure you include these resources with your report. If applicable, comment on whether or not this project should be carried out by other teams.

This project would be a great starting point for any adult education centre, but we also think much of our project is also applicable to youth sector. We focused on accessibility and staff needs and requests for training through google survey forms. We have posted our resources on our website, which is available to anyone at all. We will be delivering a workshop at the PROCEDE conference where three of the teachers involved will also present.

Please review our website material and resources below:

<https://sites.google.com/lbpearson.ca/placecartieradultcentre/professional-development>