

A magnifying glass with a dark blue frame and a grey handle is positioned in the top right corner. The lens of the magnifying glass is focused on the text 'Case Study 3'.

Case Study 3

Technology in the Classroom

My class is a great class filled with many students with diverse needs. This year I have one student with a learning disability. At the beginning of the school year, the parents of this student shared the Psychology Education report with the school. In the report there were recommendations that this student have access to technology for reading and writing support. The two concerns that I originally had were how to support this student to use this technology, and whether the student might feel singled out or possibly even resist using the assistive technology.

To help make using technology a smooth process in our classroom, I requested a meeting to go through the Psychology Education report to better understand these recommendations. I met with the Learning Assistance teacher and district school psychologist to review the information outlined in the report. Since this is a new area for me, the Learning Assistance teacher suggested making a referral to the school based team.

The school based team offered me helpful support by acquiring the technology and sharing many online resources. The team identified the school supports and district resource staff that could support me including the SET-BC partner, Technology Coordinator and Inclusion Teacher. The SET-BC partner offered to help me learn how to use the technology. The SET-BC partner also recommended online learning opportunities and resources such as CAST and the SET-BC website. The CAST website (<http://www.cast.org/>) helped me understand how to plan for Universal Design for Learning in my classroom. I also listened to the webinar presentations on the SET-BC website to understand more of how I can better help all of my students.

Through my research I discovered that there are different reading and writing support programs available in French such as Kurzweil, a text-to-speech tool with built-in writing support; Solo Literacy Suite Software, a text reader, graphic organizer and draft builder program; Dragon Naturally Speaking or Dragon Speak, a speech-to-text tool that captures voice in print; Google Apps for Education such as Read&Write for Google Chrome, Google Docs and Google Classroom.

Then I had to come up with a deliberate approach, as I was aware of the training time required for me and my student to learn these new programs along with the amount of support staff time that was available to implement of this technology. I was also mindful of what approach would allow for easier inclusion in classroom planning. I quickly became aware that all students would benefit from instruction and access to this type of technology in the classroom.

To implement the technology in my classroom, I scheduled a professional working team meeting with the French Resource Teacher, SET-BC partner and Technology Coordinator to outline a sequence of steps with roles and responsibilities. The team had lots of suggestions and helped to identify a strong plan of implementation. The SET-BC partner offered to help me design a unit following Universal Design for Learning principles which incorporated student choice and technology. The Technology Coordinator offered to train the class in how to use Read&Write for Google Chrome, and the Resource Teacher offered to support students using the technology in the classroom.

Once the plan was put in place, I figured out some of the other details such as confirming access to laptops and Chromebooks, as well as ordering noise cancelling headphones for the class to use. I planned a few blocks of time with the Technology Coordinator for some whole class training sessions of Read&Write for Google Chrome. I scheduled some blocks of time with the Resource Teacher to help support the target student and others using the technology.

I started modelling using Read&Write for Google Chrome tools during whole class instruction. I began using Google Classroom to share classroom materials with students. I started creating assignments and tests that can be used with Read&Write for Google Chrome. I also did progress check-ins with the students using the technology on a weekly basis.

I scheduled a follow up IEP meeting with the French Resource Teacher, Learning Assistance Teacher, parent, and student to share some of the ideas suggested by the professional working team, and to gather input from the student and parent. The ideas were captured in the student's IEP.

The outcomes of incorporating technology in my classroom were better than I expected. I found that planning differently and being mindful of what ALL students needed was easier than adapting or modifying a plan for one student. It also meant that all students had access to instruction, all students were able to respond in ways that worked for them, and all students felt included in the class community. I was so pleased to discover that the student with the learning disability was able to meet learning outcomes using this technology. The student saw how the technology tools gave him access to information outside of school, and allowed him to be more independent. The school team felt confident that by including technology meaningfully and regularly throughout his day, he would be well prepared to use technology in higher grades.

