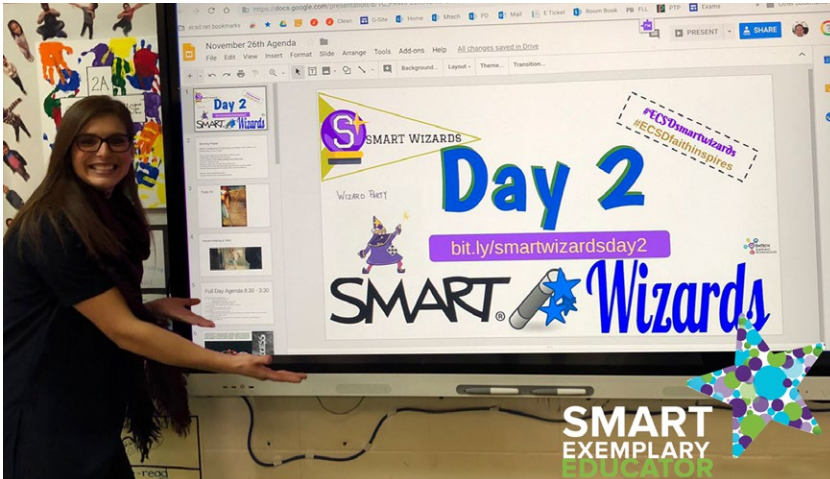




Building Capacity With Purpose; “Preparing Students for A World Not Yet Realized”

A Professional Development snapshot with Edmonton Catholic Schools, Alberta, Canada



Motivation

Edmonton Catholic Schools knows that in order to impact student learning, it is essential that teachers have the necessary skills to use technology in their classrooms efficiently and effectively. Due to the sheer size of Edmonton Catholic Schools (2,800 teachers and 43,000 students), it has been difficult to reach all educators when implementing purposeful professional development. Like many districts, there are barriers to a successful implementation, including building ongoing capacity for sustainable training, time, and funding. For example, professional development would come and go, and often there was little capacity for follow through. John Korassa, an emerging tech consultant for Edmonton Catholic Schools and a future-thinking leader, was willing to take on this massive scale professional learning challenge. He saw an opportunity to intentionally capitalize on the district’s investment with SMART to build a program that could continuously have an impact across the district.

Why SMART?

In keeping with Edmonton Catholic Schools’ foundational statement, “Preparing our students for a world not yet realized,” John turned to SMART Technologies to help achieve his vision of building capacity with professional learning. With SMART’s long-standing reputation of inspiring greatness, he chose to leverage SMART’s hardware and software to help his teachers create innovative learning opportunities for students to be creators, critical thinking analysts, communicators and producers. At the same time, he wanted to create an environment that allowed teachers to focus on learning, instead of spending unnecessary time on how the technology worked. According to John, “technology should be the background of a lesson, not the feature.” SMART’s ease of use and teacher-friendly technology was a crucial factor in his decision to collaborate with SMART and to align their 21st-century learning initiatives with the SMART solution.

Teachers and School

- Edmonton Catholic Schools, AB, Canada
- John Korassa, Emerging Technology Consultant
- Danny Maas, Education Technology Manager
- Tim Cusack, Assistant Superintendent
- Spotlight Schools:
 - St. Kateri Catholic School
 - Monsignor Fee Otterson Catholic School

Challenge

To begin a district-wide, teacher-vested, purposely scaled professional development training program to build SMART capacity.

SMART Solution

- SMART Board® MX series
- SMART Learning Suite

Result

25 Edmonton Catholic educators created and shared over 70 interactive lessons with their district. Edmonton Catholic is now the most significant global SEE contributor from one school district.

Leveraging Vested Interest and Accountability to Build Capacity

Edmonton Catholic partnered with SMART's Efficacy and Implementation Team to create a customized professional learning plan designed to help them build capacity with the launch of their new SMART Wizard Learning Academy. To bring the program to scale, John knew teachers had to be invested. Teachers were asked to apply to be part of the SMART Wizard Learning Academy and were held accountable to specific requirements in order to take part in this opportunity.

SMART Wizard Teachers had to:

- Be willing to try new ideas and have a sense of adventure as they participated in three PD sessions.
- Share each of their SMART classroom experiences with other teachers in the district through peer classroom visits or videotaped lessons, or by sharing reflections.
- Contribute three SMART lessons to the global SMART community, and a local lesson sharing repository.
- Apply to become a SMART Exemplary Educator (SEE), and continue their learning beyond the Academy.

The goal of the Academy was to give teachers the tools, time, and space to practice with like-minded teachers and share resources with the local and global community. In fact, St. Kateri and Monsignor Fee Otterson campuses played a significant role in allowing teachers to practice their art of SMART teaching, as they wanted to foster the idea of "Teaching with NO limits!"

Outcomes

Through the leadership of Edmonton Catholic Schools and the partnership with SMART's Efficacy and Implementation Team, 25 SMART Wizards were able to create, explore and share over 70 lessons with their district and the broader SMART global community in less than six months. Teachers had time to explore, ask questions and see the immediate impact of their lessons with students.

Seeing the teachers involvement, and having critical conversations about student learning and what is relevant in a future-ready classroom cultivated a desire to continue and expand the Academy to further achieve scale. In fact, with 30 SEEs to date, Edmonton Catholic has the most SMART Exemplary Educators from one district worldwide. Being a part of SMART's SEE program will provide their teachers with continued access to new global professional learning networks and collaboration projects they previously did not have. Edmonton Catholic Schools will be able to leverage the capacity of the new SEEs to continue to scale 21st-century learning skills across the district.

"This program showed that given the right tools, a vested interest and the right community, extraordinary things could happen in the classroom".

– John Korassa

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"SMART has allowed my students and I to extend our learning beyond what we had first imagined. It's given each student a voice in class discussion and the ability to interact in class regardless of ability! We love it."

– Colette Tercier (SMART Wizard Teacher)

About SMART

SMART Technologies Inc. is a world leader in simple and intuitive classroom technology solutions. We are an innovator in software and interactive technologies that enable natural collaboration, helping every student and teacher discover and develop their greatness. To learn more, visit smarttech.com.

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