



# A Recipe for Success

## in helping teachers integrate technology effectively

by Dorothy Laufer



Technology has been around a long time, yet each new generation of teachers must learn how to integrate it with all their other skills. Computer specialist Dorothy Laufer has had considerable experience helping teachers develop proficiency and enthusiasm for technology, which they then share with their students. Her "recipe for success" is much the same whether the setting is a special education classroom, an ESL class in the Czech Republic, or—as in the following article—a Mohawk immersion elementary school in Canada. This fall Dorothy and her husband Julio return to the Czech Republic for their sixth tour of duty; we look forward to their further reports!

- Get a group of teachers who are interested in learning how to use computers with their students or who have a strong desire to learn some basic computer skills themselves.
- Add a teacher who has had some experience and is excited about using computers with students. Call him/her the leader.
- Put them together in a room, give each teacher a computer and some time to explore.
- The leader will start the ball rolling by demonstrating samples and ideas for inspiration. He/she will get the teachers started on a project that speaks to that particular teacher.
- **Add a person to provide technical support; this is a very important ingredient. Do not skimp on it!**
- Slowly add more time.
- Continue to meet over a prolonged period for the sharing of ideas and thoughts. The leader will be available to come in and work with each teacher and his/her class. The technical expert will be available to help the teachers.
- **Result: SUCCESS!**

In the fall of 2003 my colleague, Terry Gandell, and I were invited to design a project to train teachers to use technology. We reported on the design and result of the project after the first phase (*The Catalyst*, Vol. 21 #2, Winter 2004-05). This article included a description of this project as well as samples of work from some of the teachers who took part in the workshop; it also contained comments from teachers and from some of the administrators at the Education Center of that school board.

Everyone felt that the training was very successful.

Since then we have gone on to train two more groups of teachers.

We are now at the end of working with our third group of teachers. Did I say the end? It is really only the beginning. Teachers who have gone through the workshops have begun to put some of their new skills into practice and are looking forward to exploring new activities with their students. They know that by next year they will have developed a certain amount of expertise. They certainly have the enthusiasm to venture forth with confidence.

One of the things that happened, as a direct result of these workshops, is that the computer lab is now very highly used. The students are not sent to the lab to learn "com-

puters" as a separate subject. They are brought there by their teachers. Every teacher has one or more computers in the classroom so the work does not start and end in the computer lab. Because the computers are networked it is easy (with the help of the technical expert) to continue working on something they may have started in the lab, or in any class in the school. The problem of how to schedule the lab so that it is available for use by all teachers is something that still needs attention. This is a relatively new "problem," to be solved within each school.

The school board that initiated this project has three schools, and in the past we worked with teachers from the three schools. This most recent group of teachers attending our workshops are all from the same school, a school where the language of instruction is Mohawk in the younger grades, with English added after the first few years. Therefore, all teaching in the lower elementary classes is done in Mohawk. This dimension made graphics very popular; the software chosen by most of the teachers was: *Power Point*, *Kid Pix*, and *PC PAINT*. The academic goals in using this software included language development and motivation for writing. Because it is very easy to insert sounds in Power Point, it is attractive for second language teaching.

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The kindergarten project: PowerPoint storybook and play



The kindergarten teacher used PowerPoint to develop a story book that each child could bring home. This story book had a language experience story (play) that the children developed with their teacher. It included the children's drawings (scanned in), their voices (saying words in Mohawk), as well as the story that they all wrote together.

The goals that the teacher listed are:

- Students will be able to use the mouse to listen to a book.
- Students will create art to go with the story.
- Students will learn their part in the play.
- Students will have a 'book' to bring home and share with their family.

Samples from the kindergarten project are below.



The play:

Not only did the kindergartners learn how to use the mouse and write a story about mice, they also wore mouse costumes for their play. This girl, Kariwenha:wi, proved to be a natural-born actress! (The picture looks much better on our web site) [www.thecatalyst.us](http://www.thecatalyst.us)

The French Mice wake up to a loud noise. (Shake them in their nest.) One runs in holding a big block (blue color of building) & says:



(The sky is falling - repeats 3 times. Something hit me on my head)

**Takaròn:ien'ne! Takaròn:ien'ne! Takaròn:ien'ne!**

The K mice were eating their lunch when they learned about the dinosaur.

- Takaròn:ien'ne! Takaròn:ien'ne! Takaròn:ien'ne! (all)
- Tiok nahò:ten wa'tewakenon'wàre'ke. (Iearthshook)
- Oia'takeronté:'a i:waks ne tsi ionterihwaienstákhwa. (all)
- (Táichserapie & Kariwenha:wi cry)
- Tóhsa tesewahséntho! (Kariwenha:wi)
- Kén:'en entewé:shéke tentewatská:hon, sok entewákhri'tsharón:ní. (Toloshorapie)



Teachers prepared a story board and scanned their own pictures into PowerPoint presentation during workshop.

The skills that were listed as: following directions, listening to the story, becoming comfortable with a Power Point slide presentation, sharing, group work, planning.



### Other projects to integrate technology



Another teacher prepared goals for her grade 5 social studies class (*below*), followed by a template, an 8-slide show with an instruction on each slide, such as: my life at school; what I do in my free time; my family; the foods I eat, etc.

- Students will prepare a PowerPoint slide presentation that will tell about their current lives in the year 2006, to be read by a future grade 5 student in about 100 years.
- Each student will then put in things about his/her own life, including text, sound, graphics, including photos.

Another teacher, in the lower elementary grades, chose a winter theme. Here the instructions to the students were to prepare a short slide show. The goals are listed below and as you can see, are totally language based:

- Students will choose 5 Mohawk Vocabulary words on a theme (e.g. winter).
- Student will say the words and insert the sound next to each word.
- Students will talk about their story as they create it
- Students will write the short story using the words they've chosen.
- Students will illustrate their story using Paint.

Skills: Written expression in the Mohawk language; mouse control; PowerPoint: inserting text, inserting sound, navigating between slides; Paint: using fill, line, color.



One of our teachers decided that he would overcome his computer phobia by just becoming familiar with the computer. In his case, he wanted to explore the internet for sources of teaching customs. This is what he wrote as he worked on his final project: a resource guide for other teachers in his school: "...When I started this workshop, I didn't even want to touch the computer. Now I'm excited about all the information about so many topics. I've learned how to use the internet, cut and paste, and my work is still in progress. I'm looking forward to using it more."

Still another teacher became caught up in the ability to create animation in a power point slide; she felt compelled to explore this (*see illustrations at top of page*). I am certain that her enthusiasm will transfer to the students as she puts her idea into practice. I certainly remember becoming very

excited about this kind of thing as I learned how to work with the computer. As you can see each teacher had the freedom to develop an activity that served to a) give the teacher a comfort level with a particular piece of software, and b) work towards academic goals that were part of the curriculum.

As a trainer in this project I am really impressed with how this school board is handling the teacher training and would like to give them total credit for its success. The fact that they are willing to invest in giving each teacher time to attend this workshop is admirable. It is not easy to find substitutes where the language of instruction is in Mohawk. It became clear that this was, indeed, a challenge, but somehow, they found ways to do it. The fact that the lab has a support person present is amazing. In my opinion this is the key. The support person attended our workshops and became an active participant and the most valuable member of the team. He was able to show teachers how to file things so that they could access their work in the classroom, he was able to help with scanning, printing, etc. He's the person on the spot when he is needed to help teachers with the activities they prepare. It is our hope that other school boards follow this example for training teachers to integrate technology into their program.

*Dorothy Laufer is a computer specialist, advocate, and consultant, with emphasis on resources for individuals with disabilities. She has taught in the Montreal Public Schools, at McGill University, and this fall will begin her 6th year teaching English as a second foreign language in the Czech Republic. She can be reached at home or away at [d.laufer@netaxis.ca](mailto:d.laufer@netaxis.ca)*

#### **A teacher shares her view of the inservice experience:**

*My class is having a fantastic time on the computers in our school, which I didn't think was an option for our group until Dorothy came in to work with them. Since March we've been going into the lab during Lunch Hour (when nobody's there) so the kids can explore the programs. They daily draw something on which they must type their name (so they have to learn to spell their names, which are all 11 letters & more - not an easy task. Using the computer has given them the drive to accomplish learning to spell their names!) Then they ask me if they can print their illustration; when given permission they know what to do to get a print on their own. They then take their illustration back into the classroom where they explain (in Mohawk) what they have drawn. And they are all eager to do this—they argue over who will be 1st. Finally, they color their picture when they have spare time. It's fantastic to see their enthusiasm. And there are so many lessons in this one activity. I am forever grateful for Dorothy's help. And I'm so amazed at the skills growth I've seen over the past few months alone!*

*Niioie:ren (Eileen Sawyer-Patton)*