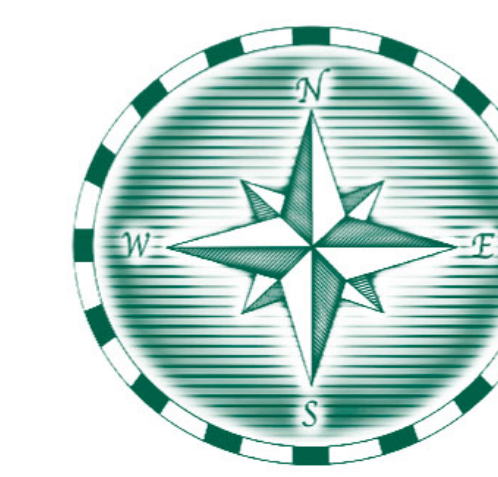


Don't Eat The Pasta !

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Introduction

Action-oriented tasks are becoming increasingly popular in language classes worldwide because they force the participants out of their comfort zone and are more student-centered.

This project aimed at measuring the impact of building "stuff" in the classroom on the cooperative skills of two cohorts of French immersion students. The students were invited to cooperate in order to build the replica of a 1905 Quebec settlement using pasta.

The Research Question

How does creating a replica of an historical settlement foster cooperative learning amongst Grade 6 and 11 French immersion students?



Research Context

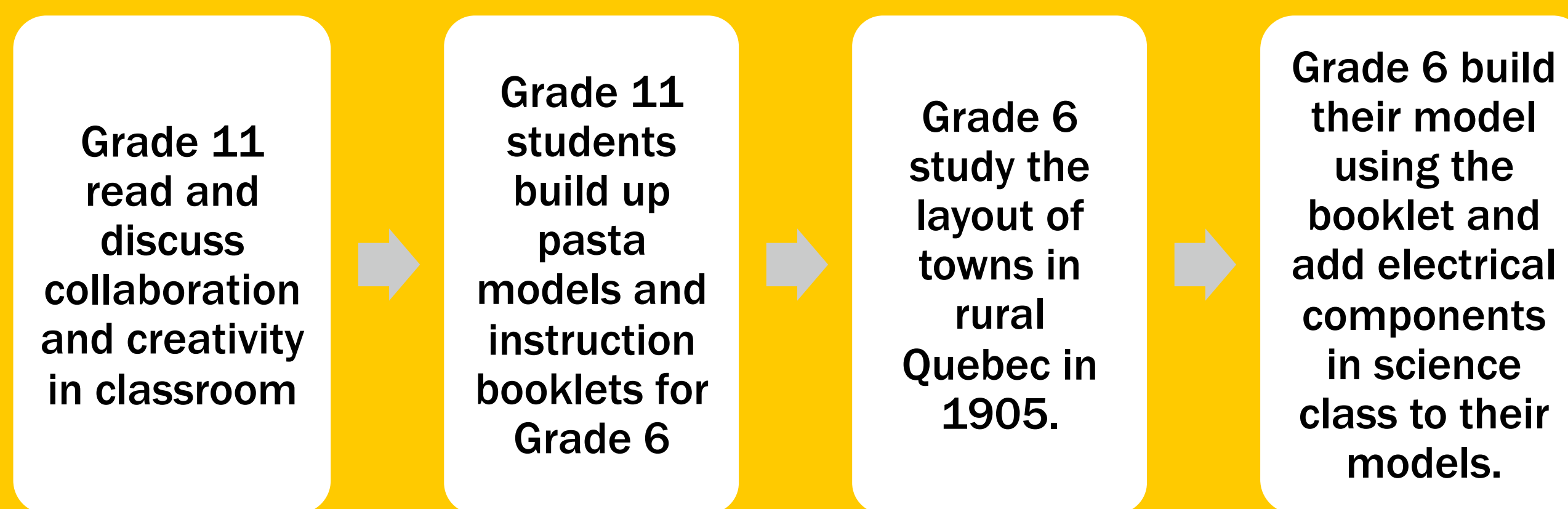
Selwyn House is a CEGEP/University preparatory school for 540 boys, combining academic and program excellence, a dedication to the French language and culture, and a compassionate and supportive environment enabling boys to live a happy, balanced and purposeful life. There are 28 different mother tongues at SHS and a diverse socioeconomic status.

Participants

Although everyone in each Grade 6 and Grade 11 class participated in the activities, our research sample included half of each group, for a total of 20 students.



The Research Action



Data Collection

The data collected consisted of pre and post questionnaires, interviews held during the building process, as well as photographs and field notes from the researchers.

Data Analysis

The responses to the pre and post questionnaire were transcribed into an Excel spreadsheet using a T-test to allow us to find elements of comparison between the students' answers through the research process.

The interviews were transcribed into Word documents to analyze commonalities in discourse within and between Grade levels about the students' vision of collaboration and the Maker movement.

We also used the field notes, photographs, and extended discussions between researchers to analyze our data.



Conclusions

The Maker Movement provides concrete opportunities to practice leadership and cooperation skills for our boys.

The project was worthwhile and beneficial. It fostered collaboration and disciplinary competence development.

Everyone had to think outside of the box to make it happen, and the enthusiasm generated by the experience was remarkable. It demanded organization and a good dose of trust from the teachers, and we were happily surprised by the results. Inter-grade contacts were positive and should be pursued in our school for the benefit of our school community.

It is possible to evaluate the process of the project realization without controlling the final outcomes of the Making. This is an opportunity to encourage good communication in second language and use of vocabulary linked to social sciences.

To improve a similar project, a few things should be kept in mind. Scheduling and material issues are a serious consideration before starting a Maker project.

This successful opportunity was only a moment in the entire year. To really foster collaboration and have a long term impact on our students' learning, there is a lot of work to do around the boys' perception of school and the value of cooperation.

Finally, to improve the evaluation process, more detailed rubrics still have to be developed for Maker projects.



Key Readings

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Hatch, M. (2013). *The Maker Movement Manifesto: Rules for Innovation in the New World of Crafters, Hackers, and Tinkerers*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Martinez, S. L. a. S., G. (2013). *Invent to learn : Making, Tinkering and Engineering in the Classroom*. California: Constructing Modern Knowledge Press.

Sawyer, K. (2007). *Group Genius: The Creative Power of Collaboration*. New York: Basic Books.

Key Findings and Discussion

Slight statistical impact on the post-test answers pointing to a more positive view of team work after the activity

Positive markers (very, good, fun, and easy) were used by both Grade 6 and Grade 11 participants to describe the quality of their group work. The participants also mentioned that they could not have completed this project on their own; that cooperation was necessary.

Communication identified as a key component of a team working strategy from most of the participants.

The Grade 11's advised Grade 6 students to plan together, to listen to their teammate's ideas and to keep in mind their common goal for the project. These advices were all aiming at a better collaboration.

Further Information

This poster and further information is available at <http://www.theibsc.org/>.

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