IN SURVIVAL MODE: ADULT EDUCATION TEACHERS EXPERIENCE OF COVID-19 AND THEIR USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

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HELLO!

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ROADMAP

Adult education in Quebec

1

Tech use during COVID

3

Tech use pre-COVID

2

Moving forward

4

1

ADULT EDUCATION

In Quebec's English-speaking community

TEACHERS

Mélanie
Urban
Individualized
Hybrid

Stella
Rural
Individualized
Hybrid

Sally
Suburban
Individualized
Hybrid

Harry
Urban
Individualized
Hybrid

Tatiana
Suburban
Whole class
Online

Claire
Suburban
Individualized
Online & in-person

Sapna
Suburban
Whole class
Online

Viviane
Suburban
Both
Online

CHALLENGES OF ADULT ED

LOTS OF LEARNING NEEDS

- Many students have learning disabilities & have experienced trauma
- Lack of resources compared to the youth sector

TEACHING LOAD

- Individualized teaching (with continuous intake)
- Multi-level (ex. sec 1-5)
- Multi-subject (ex. English, Computers, Options)

JOYS OF ADULT ED

WORKING WITH ADULTS

- Adult students bring lots of life experience
- Adult students are often more mature
- Can have higher level discussions

STUDENT SUCCESS

- Seeing students come back to school after a long pause
- Seeing students persevere & achieve their goals
- Seeing students change their minds about themselves

STRENGTHS OF
ADULT ED TEACHERS

Openness

Organization

Flexibility

2

PRE-COVID

Digital competency, tech use, & barriers to integration

DIGITAL COMPETENCY

PD

- Tech cohorts in university
- Hit-or-miss ped day workshops
- RÉCIT/TLT support
- PLN on Twitter

COMFORT LEVEL

- Tech choices can be overwhelming
- Recommendations from colleagues
- Gradually becoming more comfortable with practice

TROUBLESHOOTING

- Turn it off & turn it on again!
- Google & YouTube to figure things out
- Playing around with things to see how they work

"

I'm automatically <u>suspicious</u> of technology. I really have to see the value-added.

You would have to prove to me that there was <u>value added</u>, pre-pandemic, because at that time it was not a necessity, it was an <u>add-on</u>. It was a bonus.

- Sapna

It's interesting. I kind of make a distinction between […] teaching and learning and the mechanics of it or the organizational aspect of it.

I would put [digital technology] fairly low in terms of how important it is for learning and for teaching because I don't think the learning and the teaching happens, in my mind, really through technology. It happens with the material.

For me the <u>technology is essentially the tool to get the information</u>.

-Harry

"

To me, when I think of digital ed tools the <u>students have to be mobilized</u>, and … the digital tool makes the learning, somehow, enhanced or <u>improves the learning</u>.

- Viviane

"

I do feel <u>tech gives an opportunity to teach to different learning styles</u> more so. Like, you can do it without tech for sure, but it's so much more time consuming.

[B]ecause I'm comfortable with it, I feel like there was so much more preparation before when I didn't think to use technology. And then when I sort of realized, like going through all the students learning styles, that I could give them all the same information in different ways at the same time. It completely changed the way I taught, which is good.

– Sally

BARRIERS

INSTITUTIONAL

- Lack of devices in centres
- Internet connectivity issues
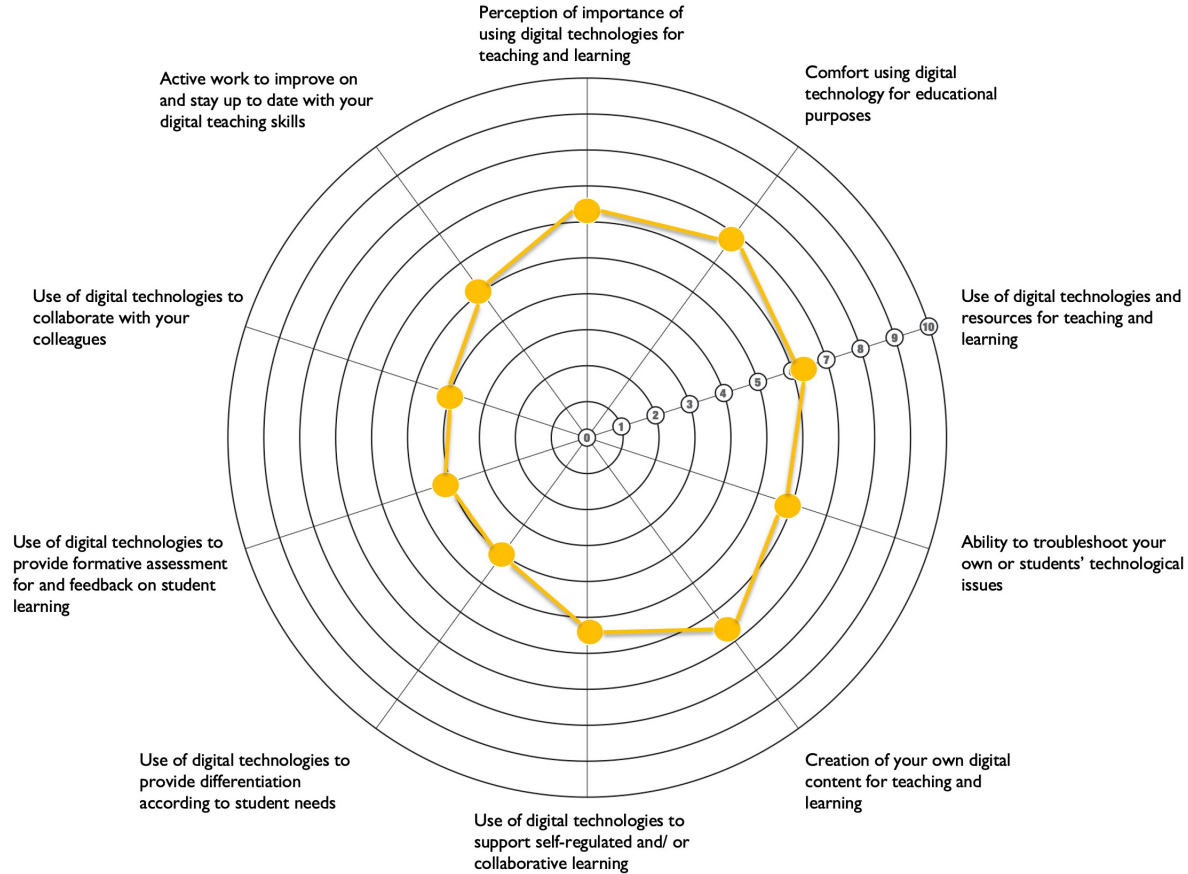- Long process to activate student accounts

COMPUTER SKILLS

- Wide range of student abilities
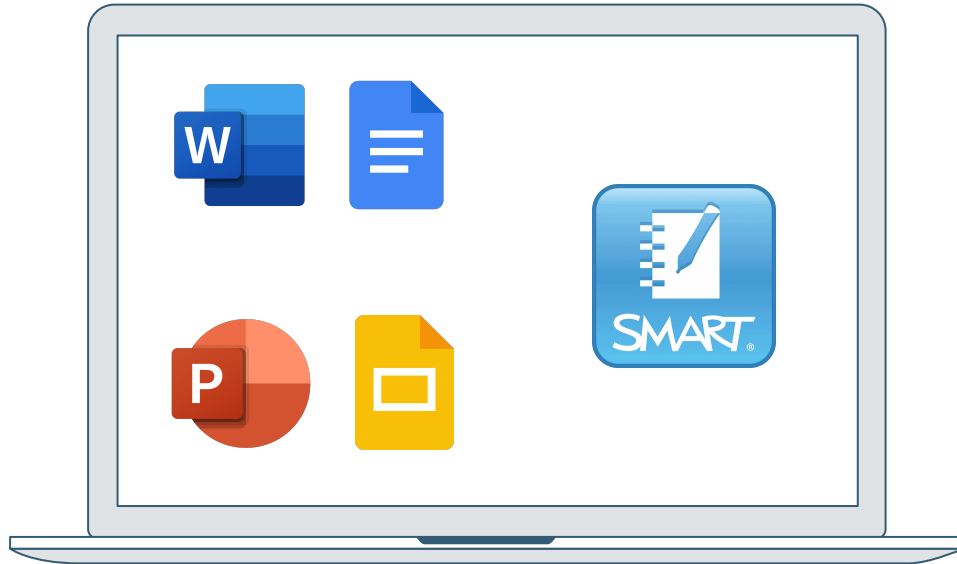- Many students lacked experience with computers & basic computer skills

TEACHING

- Handwritten exams
- Time away from the curriculum
- Lack of digital learning resources
- Time to create/adapt digital learning resources

AVERAGE TECH USE PRE-COVID

Perception of importance of using digital technologies for teaching and learning

Comfort using digital technology for educational purposes

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Ability to troubleshoot your own or students' technological issues

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Use of digital technologies to support self-regulated and/ or collaborative learning

Use of digital technologies to provide differentiation according to student needs

Use of digital technologies to provide formative assessment for and feedback on student learning

Use of digital technologies to collaborate with your colleagues

Active work to improve on and stay up to date with your digital teaching skills

TECH USE IN LEARNING

- Videos
- Tools to facilitate discussions
- Differentiated activities in English
- Recordings for presentation practice
- Digital portfolio

STUDENT REACTION

- Some hesitation about tech use

- Important to have discussions with students about *why* they were using certain tools for learning

- Students liked getting differentiated activities & being able to progress at their own pace

- Tech savvy students helped with troubleshooting

3

DURING-COVID

Hybrid & online teaching, barriers & opportunities

Well, it was about a month or maybe even six weeks before we got the official word to get cracking and figure things out. And then the issue became "okay, get in touch. Make sure you're getting direct contact with your students."

So we had to scramble around, find home emails, get that set up […] because not everybody was using school emails… But the focus in that whole first period was just getting and maintaining contact, and encouraging work to be done and helping them…

But there's no question that, you know, "le ballon a dégonflé". And a lot of students just click over, you know. Some did, but a lot didn't adapt right away.

– Harry

SAFETY MEASURES

- Rules were constantly evolving during the first months of COVID

- Educators learning the information at the same time as the public

- Adult ed rarely mentioned during government press conferences

- No bubbles in adult ed

- Curfew forced night classes online

- Conflicts with students & other staff about safety measures

- Time consuming & stressful to enforce the rules

TEACHING IN 2020-2021

SIMULTANEOUS HYBRID

- Harry & Mélanie = booking systems
- Sally = alternating rotation
- Stella = random

ONLINE

- Sapna
- Tatiana
- Viviane
- Claire

Mélanie, Claire, & Stella mentioned tech orientations

PD

Viviane
Every week we had offers to get some PD, [but] I don't really learn super well with groups. So I really like going <u>on my own</u> and finding what I need, and if I need like coaching, I will ask the RÉCIT for coaching, that works well with me.

Sapna
It was just <u>like being hit by a bus of information</u>… It was too much, in too compressed a time, too many people, too many questions. We didn't really have the time to process, so I found those increasingly useless, and I gave them up.
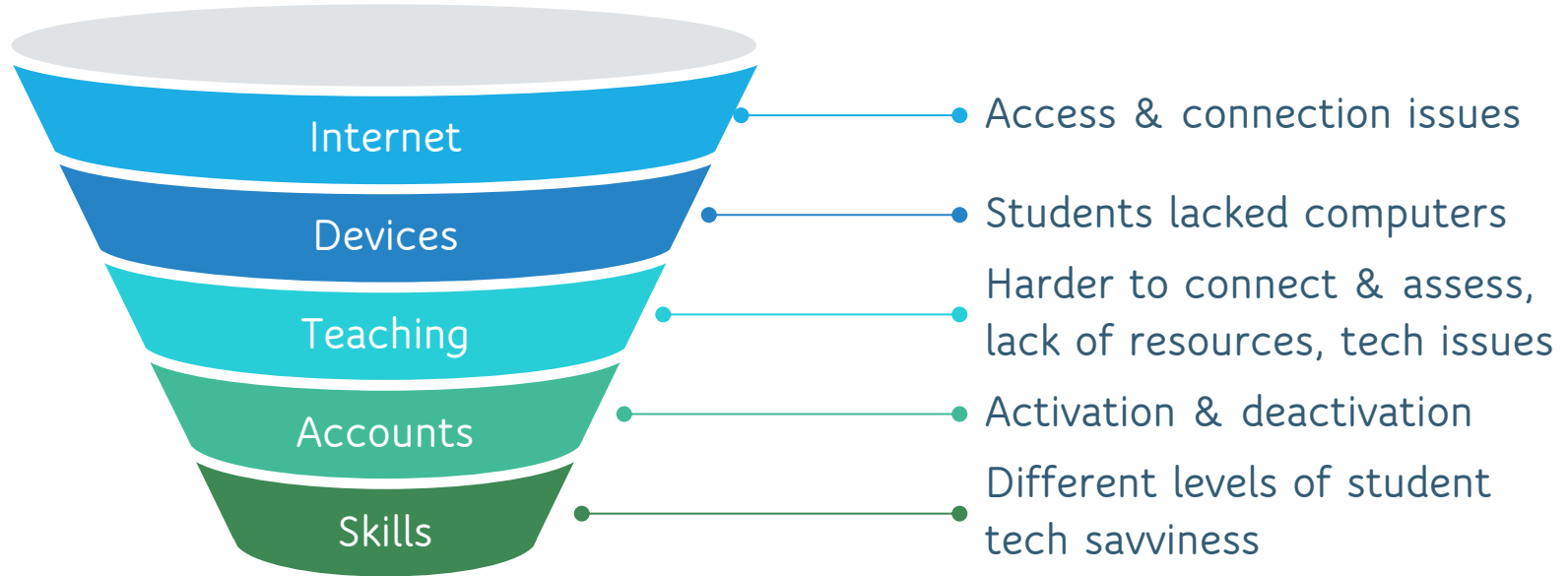
Claire
A lot of the training […], we have to adapt it from the youth sector. The trainings that we get are <u>never meant just for us, in our realities</u>. Even when you're looking at online learning and creating courses, […] it's higher education or regular high school.

Stella
There were trainings offered [after school], but sometimes, you're just like, "I'm so <u>tired</u>. It's been such a long day. If I have to spend one more minute in front of my computer, I'm going to frickin lose it."

BARRIERS/OBSTACLES

Internet — Access & connection issues

Devices — Students lacked computers

Teaching — Harder to connect & assess, lack of resources, tech issues

Accounts — Activation & deactivation

Skills — Different levels of student tech savviness

- Student & staff mental health suffered during COVID.

- Lack of access to school bus transportation meant some adult ed students couldn't get to school.

- Linguistic barriers made some students' online learning experience more difficult.

"

We've kind of equated it to _riding a unicycle through a fire_, like that's what we said a lot at school this year.

We keep going back to the metaphor: you're riding a unicycle and the floor is on fire and then your unicycle is on fire.

– Stella

"

At the beginning [it] was actually <u>quite stressful</u> [doing hybrid teaching] because there was so much going on at once before I was really organized.

I felt the quality of my communication and individual teaching just kind of go down because there were too many things happening at once. Like sometimes <u>I felt like I was like floating outside my body</u>, just watching myself type 1,000 things and connect.

- Sally

"

You have to also remember what book the student is on, where they are in the book, what way they learn, the strategies that go along with them - which is not bad when you're all kind of in-person and everyone's sort of like relaxed - but when it's everything…

Because <u>with the thing in your ear too, you're getting dings</u>. So you're talking to a student, and they're messaging you and you're getting all this stuff in your ear as well. And that's why I became so organized because I was like, "I'm going to just lose it one day. Like this is not good."

- Sally

OPPORTUNITIES

x4
- Catalyst for change
- Nice to teaching from home

x3
- Easier for students to balance commitments
- Learning materials are organized & accessible
- Easier to communicate & share with other staff

x2
- Digital feedback & formative assessment
- Increased student digital competency

"

What's sort of like a surprising blessing of COVID is that it actually <u>forced us to use the technology at our disposal</u>… And now that we are using them, it is cool to see like those doors opened. — Tatiana

I see it now when I'm writing up a module for Contemporary World… It's <u>questions and links</u>, that's what we do now. You don't write a big module with long explanatory paragraphs with synthesized knowledge. You ask questions and say "go find it." I like that part of it. It's like an adult approach. — Harry

"

With Google Classroom, [everything is] organized by topic… Whenever a student says, "I need another copy," or, "I lost my assignment," it's all right there. So especially with students who struggle with <u>executive functioning</u>, who have a hard time remembering due dates, remembering what they need to do, they need instructions repeated, it's all there.

- Tatiana

[Google Classroom] made prepping a lot easier for me too, and managing the students' grades, and things like that. Having everything in one place. And because of that increased organization, I feel like I've felt <u>more in control</u> in the classroom, in a way.

When I prep, it's just a series of clicks. So that is helpful, and I feel like that's also allowed me to be a little bit <u>more creative</u> too. It's freed up some time to try different things.

– Tatiana

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

COLLABORATIVE
- ⊡ Class discussions
- ⊡ Breakout rooms
- ⊡ Mini-workshops
- ⊡ Group chats

INDIVIDUAL
- ⊡ Textbooks
- ⊡ Forms
- ⊡ Writing/reading
- ⊡ Interactive activities
- ⊡ Worksheets & review
- ⊡ Videos

TEACHER-LED
- ⊡ Lectures
- ⊡ Demonstrations

IMPACT

Stella

Hybrid learning has really made us <u>teach to an exam</u>.

All of that stuff that's in the program that's not on the exam, I do not have time to do this now, and I don't like that because I feel like the students are not getting the same education that the students before them have gotten…

I feel like we're really doing a <u>disservice</u> to some of these students who need that extra.
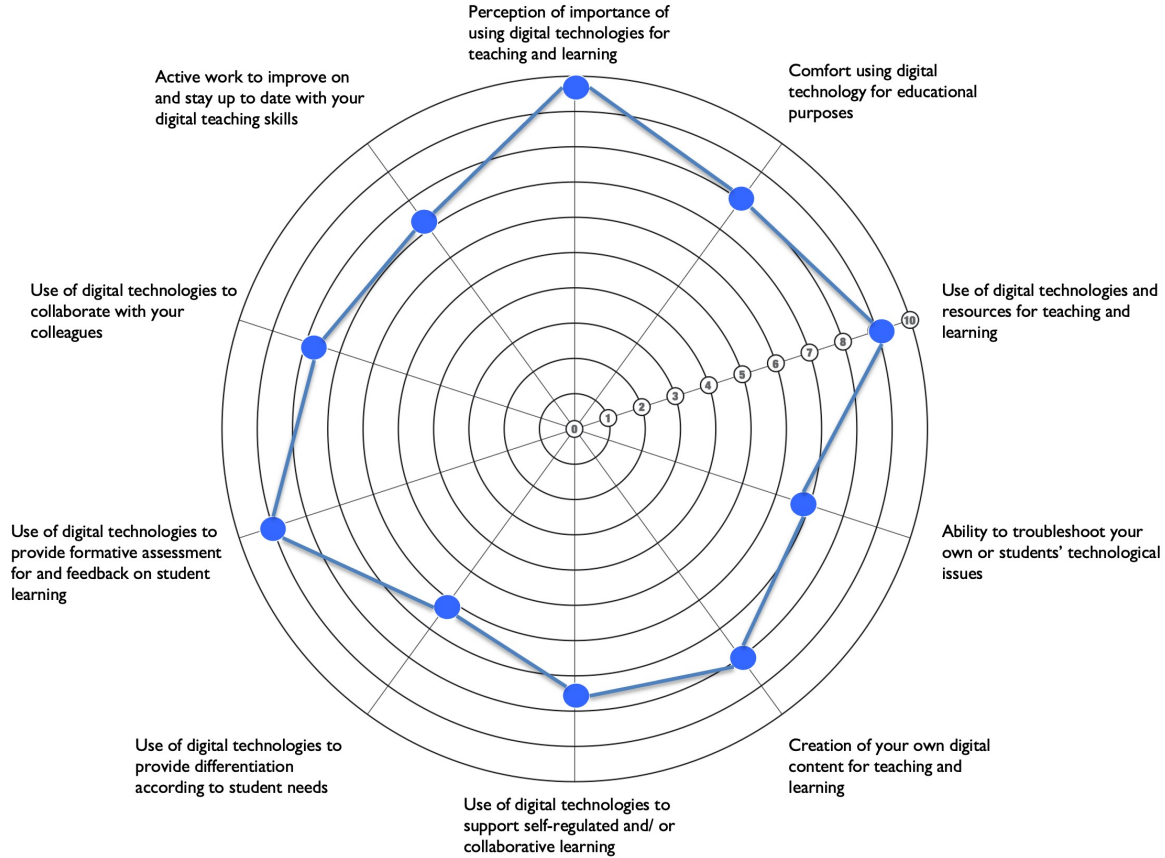
Mélanie

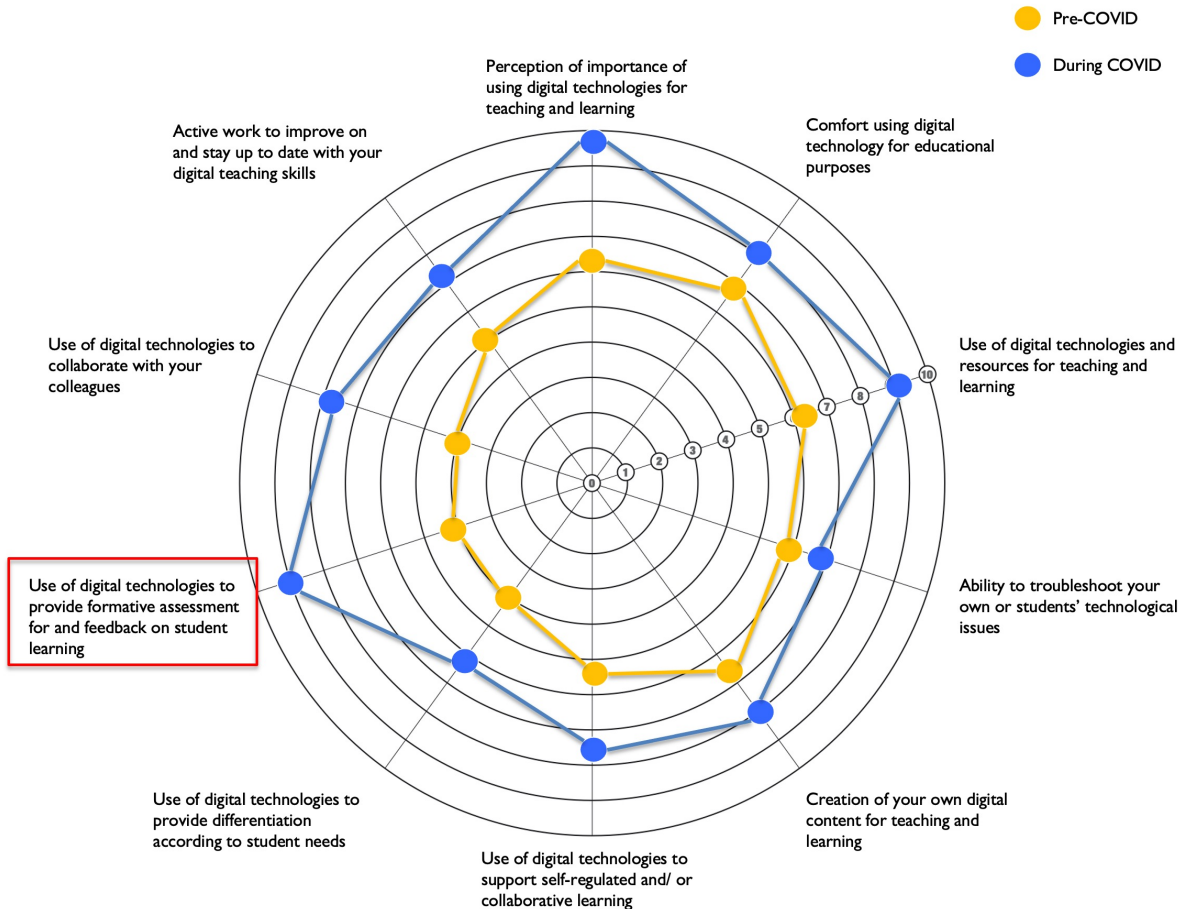I don't do anything that I was doing before, which is crazy…

We were working a lot with paper [but now] if I'm creating new material, I'll do it like from the basis online, and how my students are going to access the material, and how I would like it to be shown to me if I was in their shoes.

Because <u>paper is boring</u>, when you think about it.

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CHANGE IN TECH USE

Pre-COVID

During COVID

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4

MOVING FORWARD

Changes, support, advice

7 out of 8 participants explicitly mentioned that they will continue to use their LMS to organize and share resources with their students.

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⊡ BYOD & regular internet use for sharing/creating

⊡ Introductory computer course

⊡ Hybrid or VC on an as-needed basis

SUPPORT

ONLINE TEACHING

- ☐ No more hybrid
- ☐ Co-teachers
- ☐ IT support
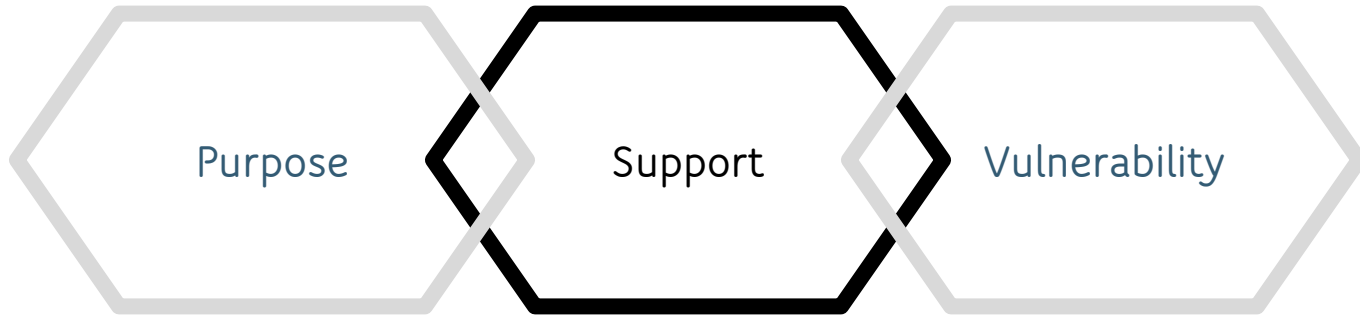- ☐ Work from home
- ☐ Choose your own tools

RESOURCES & PD

- ☐ Time to develop resources
- ☐ Sharing of resources
- ☐ Adult ed specific training
- ☐ Subject-specific Après-cours
- ☐ RÉCIT & TLT support

STUDENT SUPPORT

- ☐ Academic support to fill learning gaps
- ☐ Mental health resources
- ☐ Activities to build community

Purpose

Support

Vulnerability

"

If you just want to use technology to use it, don't. You need to work smarter, not harder. So if you're spending more time on creating material and it doesn't change anything, don't.

– Mélanie

Don't see the technology as "that's the goal." The technology is a tool, *learning is always the goal*.

– Viviane

Go find someone to help you: another teacher, someone from RÉCIT. Use all the resources that you have at your disposal, and don't be afraid and shy to say "I don't know this," because if you don't know it there's tons of other people who don't know it too.

– Claire

Just reach out, don't be afraid to reach out. And then you'll also realize that you're not alone.

– Sapna

"

One thing I would say is not to be afraid to mess up in front of your students… It feels like the culture of teaching is that we have to be perfect and we have to know everything […] and there's been so much research that you know shows that were meant to be kind of facilitators, which means <u>we're also human</u>.   - Sally

I think just <u>do your best</u>, honestly. Don't be afraid to make mistakes. Stuff happens; don't worry about it. Tell your students, "yeah, I'm learning this too. I have no idea what's going on. Can any of you help?" They're more than happy to help a lot of the time. - Claire

THANKS!

Any questions?

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