

Using Cloud Learning Suites for Collaborative Inquiry and Team Presentations



Using Office 365 in the cloud, Grade 10 Academic students analyzed TV sitcoms for bias and stereotype. They co-authored the analysis by building *PowerPoint* slides simultaneously and in real time and then presented to the larger group.

Traditionally students may have worked separately and amalgamated each person's findings; but, with a cloud learning suite, such as Office 365, the collaboration is much more authentic. Each member of the group is more likely to contribute equally, rather than one person taking the lead, putting all the pieces together, and adding and revising more heavily than other group members. Further, working simultaneously in real time lends itself to more authentic group think, as members question, rethink and revise while they navigate through their peers' contributions. In the case of students working in the same physical space – as was the case here - oral conversations are happening while students are building the slides, further deepening engagement and critical thinking.

If you prefer Google Apps, over Office 365, that is okay. You are in fact using the popular choice amongst teenage students. When asked which they preferred – Google Apps or Office 365 – students responded with the former. They prefer the simplified interfacing and ease of use with Google Apps and claim they really are not familiar with Microsoft apps such as *PowerPoint* and *Word*. But, despite this, they were certainly able to learn Office 365 and use it well within 75 minutes. This just goes to show how millennials really can move seamlessly from one platform to another and use unfamiliar applications with ease and confidence. After all, in our current technological landscape, this is what is expected of them and apparently of us, too.

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