



Vice-principals at York CDSB

Using CPCO eLearning Resources

Principal Angela Di Prima has reviewed hundreds of online resources to construct the content for workshops she delivers to vice-principals at York Catholic District School Board. The challenge is to whittle that down to the very few she needs to deliver successful and faith-based professional learning. That's where the CPCO eLearning portal provided some of the rich content she was seeking.

She has used the George Couros module wherein he outlines why leaders in education should embrace social media to further develop relevant, respectful relationships with students, parents, educators and communities. In fact, Couros is scheduled to present to the members of the YCDSB 21st Century teams of teachers and administrators in April.

"I was looking for resources that are current and Catholic, especially, given that we're a Catholic board and I'm looking for leadership resources that are provincially based." Another CPCO resource that proved helpful to Angela was the December newsletter article on the Technology-Enabled Teaching and Learning Institute. It dovetailed very well for use in her *21st Century Learning Workshop*.

"We've delivered a series of workshops through our Curriculum and I.T. departments where we look at ways to integrate technology in an authentic way to promote 21st century skills."

... Angela Di Prima - Principal Special Assignment

York Catholic District School Board

Angela says the workshops promote the growth mindset that people need when they are embracing new technologies and to recognize that it is not the future, it is the way of business and society today.

The November Technology-Enabled Teaching and Learning Institute was a timely and powerful event to support Angela's PL goals. "It taught us to first see technology as an awareness issue: *"Were the workshop attendees even aware that this institute had taken place?"*

Angela has been collaborating with Luciana Cardarelli, CPCO's Program and Member Services Coordinator to have a new eLearning module developed to address the theme of 'Leading Mentally Healthy Schools'. It's also the theme of the upcoming CPCO annual conference.

An example of how Angela makes the connection to our Catholic faith can be found in her workshop last September when Sister Angela Ann Zukowski presented her Prayer for Technology - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZHjtbov2vs4>. "The learning goal for that session was to start the professional dialogue around Sister Angela Ann Zukowski's message for us as administrators and instructional leaders in a Catholic board and to brainstorm starting or continuing actions that we will take toward moving our school communities into the

digital milieu while being true to our Catholic tradition.

“Sister Angela refers to the vocation of a Catholic educator as being one who is called to create portal for inviting our students and their families into a deeper appreciation and understanding of life-long Faith formation,” explains Angela Di Prima.

Angela uses leading questions to prompt critical thinking among the participants such as: *“What resonates for you in George Couros’ comments? What are some ways that the lines between leader and learner have blurred for you?”* This ensures that the workshop is much more engaging, interactive and much more participatory. There is less of an opportunity to just receive information; it’s more an opportunity for participants to learn from each other, to share and that networking is important.”

Angela has been receiving very positive feedback:

“Effective and useful discussion of our role as leaders of instruction in our digital world.”

“The resources are good for further consultation.”

“The documentation and handouts are useful; discussion productive, especially the material on the Catholic framework.”

“We need to make people feel comfortable and I purposely chose the title ‘tech-enabled’ as opposed to ‘tech-savvy’ administrator because I don’t think it’s necessary to be tech-savvy and absolutely knowledgeable in the details of the technology and each technology. Tech-enabled means you have a good overall understanding of it and an appreciation of which software, which application can be most beneficial in the different programs; that you can have an intelligent conversation with the teachers that may be the experts in a particular area.”

Another workshop is called “Thinking About Student Thinking ... To Inform Literacy Instruction”, where a key factor is the use of data:

“In that workshop we were looking at different software applications that could be useful to administrators in their school planning and school improvement planning. For example, we did a session on EQAO data and it was to highlight that there are databases and software applications that can be used and how they would be used by administrators in their school improvement planning for student achievement.”

One of the slides included in that presentation asks vice-principals: “Are we preparing our students for our *past* or their *future*?”

“It’s about being relevant today ... it’s no longer ‘Are we preparing for the future?’ We really have to ask: Is the educational system and the educational model preparing students to be active digital citizens in this world?”

Angela hasn’t encountered vice-principals who fear the technology; rather they are recognizing that they are trying to do the best that they can. The bigger issue is they are trying to work with and inspire staff who although eager, may be concerned about their own skill level. “The administrators are very keen about using technology and somewhat overwhelmed too.”

Angela’s workshops are designed to accommodate busy schedules: “We try to remove as many systemic barriers that will prevent people from attending. Of course there are always reasons why a vice-principal can’t attend because they must be at their school so barring those realities the participation of the administrators is very high.

The workshops are offered on one day and there are two options to choose from – a morning session or an afternoon session.

Readers of this article that want more information or want to access shared resources can contact Angela:

Angela Di Prima, Principal Special Assignment
York Catholic District School Board
Catholic Education Centre
320 Bloomington Road West
Aurora, Ontario, L4G 0M1
905 713 1211 or 416 221 5050 ext. 13863
angela.diprima@ycdsb.ca