

hi
my name is Sean Gorman and today i'm
with
two other teachers a primary teacher and
an inner
and middle school teacher and we will
be talking about our experiences during
the remote learning time during covid19
about um specifically about the two
platforms of
google classroom and freshgrade and our
experiences
with them so um i'm just going to
introduce i'll let you
ladies introduce yourself maybe start
with amanda

hi i'm amanda um i teach grade 7
french immersion in victoria
and i'm kenzie i teach grade one in
victoria as well

yeah i'm a great
um five teacher here in victoria so
we're kind of we do not have
a high school um voice in this
conversation

but uh we will talk about our
experiences

with um cobin 19 and these platforms
so just to start off uh i wanted to talk
about what

what went well during this time for us i
can start

if you'd like um that i think what went
well is that

uh it was a difficult time for everyone
and these platforms kind of allowed us
to

um hand out like give out material and
resources to

families to use to help create learning
opportunities for

everyone um some families that work better than others and some and how people kind of reacted to it it was a very new terrain for everyone so it kind of it kind of put a spotlight on these platforms as uh kind of a starting point because beforehand without this technology of these platforms i think remote learning would have been a very different uh different looking thing but uh what was your experience uh kenzie in um in these platforms yeah i think it was like you said it kind of uh provided a time to like try things out and see what works and what doesn't um my class was already using freshgrade and throughout the year prior to copin 19. um so they were pretty comfortable with it although we didn't use it for everything during distance learning um i felt thankful that my families were already like competent and understood what fresh grade looked like and how it worked um so that was good um i don't know what about you amanda um yeah i my kids already were pretty familiar with google classroom um i didn't like i've never used it a ton in my teaching practice just like i would sometimes post random things or like for group assignments for them to upload so um so i didn't use it like regularly but the kids knew it well enough to um to be able to pick up on it pretty quickly for distance learning and they knew how to

use their um
g suite accounts and stuff and like yeah
so that went pretty well and um
i had a pretty positive response from
families for the most part i think they
were just happy to get anything
so yeah totally and then uh
so in in my class's case we used
actually google classroom quite
regularly even in just regular times
and to segue kind of what went wrong was
we use this you know on a weekly basis
for doing certain projects and they
were feeling in class i was feeling
confident that kids knew how to
do it and felt uh kind of adept on using
the platform
and then it seemed when we went to home
time when i was using this kind of scene
platform
maybe it was a little on a bigger scale
because i was handing out more resources
and more
expectations it seemed that a lot of my
kids just
froze and i was a little upset by it
honestly or like a little let down
because
we did so much in class i thought it
could just kind of pick up where it was
but then um thinking back on it i do
realize that
a they didn't have each other to ask
questions they didn't have me to ask
simple questions and three everything
was turned upside down on its head and
school kind of was maybe fading a little
bit into the
background especially with like with um
expectations of work and and and what
and what they valued i guess

yeah for sure yeah i think it was just like a challenging time to um kind of have those like school expectations melded with home and so i i found that as well seen that uh like yeah the response wasn't what i had hoped for or the like content that i received back from families uh wasn't quite what i was hoping for or what i expected but just had to adjust those expectations a little bit and uh yeah it was pretty pretty good yeah i i found that a lot of the kids i kind of realized how much they depend on teachers to like explain things to them because especially in french but like the instructions like we gave our kids learning menus and the instructions were in english purpose like purposefully because we knew that the kids would just like totally skim the french ones but they skimmed the english ones and they needed us to like explain to them over zoom how to do most things they're just so dependent on us for explaining things because that's what we're there for so it's fair but that was one thing i struggled with like like i realized how kids don't read instructions so i had to kind of walk them through things and also because their parents like with individual assignments a lot of their parents don't speak french so a lot of them had to like reach out to

me consistently just to explain certain things but um yeah yeah and i what i was thankful for google classroom a lot of stuff i did was like uploading a lot of videos and i feel like you said just like that's face to face even though you can't respond because it's a video and we did have zoom calls and everything but i think another thing that went wrong for me is uh parents uh did not know to use the platform like i expected my kids to know but at the same time because they were so young um that parents almost needed to be illiterate sorry not a illiterate with the um with the platform to allow them to even use it and be successful at home especially with some of the because parents wanted were there to help out they were kind of acting as the teacher um and then finally just with this kind of overview is what did you guys find anything that was surprising during um kobit uh times at home i something which was positive i could take away from it was like on some assignments i tried to do kind of family activities to get them all together and i was actually very surprised on how um you know of course some families are not going to participate but the families that did participate um in whole family activities kind of got into it and kind of uses all home time so like google allowed them to classroom allowed them to upload stuff

or they could upload it on freshgrade so the other kids could see and it kind of raised excitement across the board through all my students that was something that surprised me quite a bit actually

yeah um one thing that surprised me was that students who typically um kind of not struggled like with school but struggled kind of behaviorally in class um did really well with distance learning i think it's because all the distractions were taken away because these particular students are the ones who are kind of just squirrely and um get kind of silly in class so then taking those distractions away um they ended up being like my best students during distance learning and my most active students so that was kind of a nice surprise um and then some of the students who were typically like my strongest most active students kind of it like it didn't really work for them so yeah that was that was surprising i think something that i found is like because the students that i'm with are so young and me it's not necessarily a surprise it just um uh having like my kids couldn't do anything unless their parents um did it with them because they didn't have they don't have the technological literacy to like log on and check freshgrade and do that so they really needed to be like supported

by their families to
to get to the activities and then most
of my activities weren't
technology-based they would be like
uh hands-on to do with the family so i
found
that to be like a hurdle and a bit of a
surprise
um because families were so overwhelmed
with the time it was hard for them to
get through all of the activities that i
provided and to like even
log on to our platforms and see what was
out there and
for them to like jump over those hurdles
of understanding
the you know the technology of it so
yeah and now you had like a very similar
thing even though
you know even just logging on to google
classroom or freshgrade
when the parents did not do it before it
was like
very challenging and i don't know about
you guys but i received so many emails
right like oh i'm having trouble with
this oh i'm having trouble with that and
just
trying to step them through that and
sometimes it was
it seemed like a very simple answer that
they could get by just
googling it or something so maybe if you
could send something to them
it could help but uh so um moving
forward like so
if um so what resources would have been
helpful
for you during this time so if if we
could just have this magic
wand and say during this time of covid

if we had
resources that we could access what
would be like the most beneficial
resources do you think that you could
have
um for google classroom i'm not sure
like maybe this
is a setting there but i wish we could
see
what the kids see like i wish the way we
looked at it was the same
as like we could see what the kids see
because i know it looks different
between
students and teachers and sometimes i'd
be trying to describe something
to them or describe like trying to find
a comment or
certain things and it would be tricky
because i'm not i wasn't always sure
what the kids saw
um so that would be nice to have like a
setting where we could see what they see
um if that doesn't exist already and
for grading it would be great um to be
able to like
because you can make subjects in google
classroom so it'd be great to keep those
grades
in within the subjects rather than for
the grade book just being chronological
um i didn't grade for the past term
but i know i will have to next year if
we continue with this so
anything to make that easier would be
would be helpful because google i don't
don't find google classroom particularly
helpful for grading i know some high
school teachers do but
i haven't found it really helpful yet so
i would

like it if that improved a bit
okay i think um uh
going off that i use freshgrade so um
like freshgrade is a great
um assessment platform but um
it's for like providing content i was
using google apps
so my two were kind of not
uh um together you know what i mean like
it was kind of two separate parts
so i kind of like moving forward
it would be helpful if uh freshgrade
kind of had more of like
a uh was more of a platform like
google classroom where you could provide
content a little bit easier a little bit
like more
streamlined uh it's kind of clunky um
so that would be helpful and i think
like as for resources
like we were kind of talking about like
because i'm in such a young grade like
maybe some professional development for
us on like how to get more
uh savvy with the technology but also
for parents because if we're
like for the younger grades especially
it's a lot on them
to know how to use it and to understand
um the technology that we're providing
them so maybe some like
sort of you know webinar or like yeah
exactly
yeah summer summer boot camp for
classroom type thing could be helpful
because you know like we were
overwhelmed trying to like provide like
learning opportunities for the students
and like
on my mind the first thing on my mind
wasn't how to teach parents how to use

it which you know like
that is the step that maybe i needed to
take so anyways
that's a really good point i really
enjoyed uh
i like same with you kenzie freshgrade i
thought it was like an excellent
assessment
platform like i really enjoyed using it
i think it has a lot of value
um but it has some shortcomings like i
couldn't
i would i would love to do everything
over freshgrade potentially
but i also really like the idea of
google how you can upload things
individually to students
amanda you were talking about how you
know giving students out to work i mean
giving students work you could you know
make own copies for them or you could
you know attach it to google docs or
google
slides like there's so many applications
of it and it's because google is just
like this world
power where freshgrade is just a fairly
small company
yeah and isn't freshgrade like
originally designed to be a learning
portfolio so it's not really supposed to
be like every single thing
the kids are doing it's more supposed to
be like oh let's highlight this thing
from this unit this thing from this unit
it's not like to assign because we're a
google whereas google classroom is more
like
you can just assign like basic work all
the time or like it doesn't have to be
like a portfolio it's more just a

stream of work it's true and it kind of makes a portfolio in a way but it's not really meant to like it just kind of like keeps it there in the background um yeah it's it was interesting time especially being from victoria these are our two platforms i know that a lot of other districts use like microsoft teams or you know these other platforms and if we were thrown into that like for i would need a whole course you know on talking to other teachers i could maybe teach a teacher how to use google classrooms but i could never under teach a another teacher how to use microsoft so i think it's very variant um the last question i want to ask you guys um finally uh so if remote teaching continues say september we're back into online um what uh what things do you need like what things do you need moving forward do you think to be successful you know it's a little bit of a hard question but it's you know a reality that's coming upon us sooner closer and closer i'd say like more clear expectations um for reporting and just like for content um like how to how like what type of content to present because that was never clear at least at my school and i thought they did a good job of communicating stuff with us but they're like yeah the focus has to be literacy and numeracy but then we still have to give a letter

or we still have to give a grade and a comment for every subject even though the focus was literacy and number so even for pe we still had to give like a comment and a final grade so that was kind of frustrating and then also it was like everything's optional and so a lot of the kids were unclear because they're like well some kids just did nothing because it was optional and then some kids were really stressed out and did everything so it'd be nice to have like clear expectations of what needs to be done i think like i'm hoping in september it like isn't going to be an option like i i hope that like kids will have to participate so or at least like some expectations right like some you have you like it maybe you don't have to full but there is like clear expectations yeah and that's why i didn't grade this term too because it was like i was getting different things from different kids all the time so i'm like i'm not gonna grade it because like that grade's not going towards anything i'll give you feedback if you want it but it's like there was no point in grading individual work because it would have taken forever to but yeah i was similar like we did do a um we had to give uh grades out but my main tool of assessment was just feedback right like yeah

on every assignment what someone did i would put a load of us uh feedback to you back and you know what that's uh i think that's more beneficial than just giving a letter grade at the end of the unit like it actually allows them to grow but um i i i agree with you there it'd be nice to have some expectations and also yeah like also yeah just having what what we're in charge of and what were it was kind of hard i feel like during after spring break when everything kind of went down i feel like everyone was just flailing just to figure it out so i understand why all these things kind of happened but now that we've had time to think about it and be prepared i think there needs to be kind of more teachers-like um outlines i would say of like what we're supposed to do how about you kenzie what do you think um i definitely agree like with expectation it was hard again i'm like students being young like and putting that expectation on parents is a lot because a lot of them were working from home and finding it challenging balancing that like work home kid life so um yeah i guess just like having clear expectations for them and then also uh something that i had a challenge with was um not having um permission from parents to use google um so i was trying to use freshgrade as a

like a platform to provide content which
like amanda mentioned earlier it's not
meant for
so i think making sure that i have all
those permissions to use
the google apps and and the google
platform because that's much easier to
like provide
content that way and it would make my
life
much easier to have something to to
to provide content using totally and
there's so many other things to talk
about too like the whole community
aspect of your classroom
there's just all these other things that
we need to think about as well
that are super important moving forward
but um anyways ladies thank you for
coming and chatting your thoughts with
me about google classroom and freshgrade
um uh i hope i hope it
i hope it kind of opened up some doors
to think about coming for september but
uh we'll see what happens um all right
thanks for coming