

# Laptops in school classes improve scores

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Le chercheur Thierry Karsenti a examiné l'influence des ordinateurs portables dans l'apprentissage. Credit: La Tribune/Imacom par Jessica Garneau

The use of laptops in elementary and high school classrooms fosters academic success according to a study conducted in the Eastern Townships School Board (ETSB) by Thierry Karsenti of the Université de Montréal Faculty of Education.

"The ETSB has jumped from 66th to 23rd in the provincial rankings and the dropout rate has fallen from 39.4 percent in 2004-2005 to 22.7 percent in 2008-2009," says Karsenti. Some might think that the implementation of laptops in the classroom can explain these improvements, but Karsenti isn't bestowing any magical properties to information and communication technology (ICT). In his opinion, a slew of other factors must be present for laptops to have a positive influence in the classroom.

Karsenti and student Simon Collin conducted the study from April 2010 to January 2011 and selected the ETSB because every student from grade 3 to 11 has had a [laptop](#) in class for the past eight years. They surveyed 2,432 [students](#), 272 teachers, 14 interventionists, and three [school](#) administrations.

Karsenti highlights that the use of computers as a teaching tool increased concentration, reinforced motivation and facilitated both the development and the autonomy of students. In addition, it provides tailored education all the while teaching computer skills.

"We are witnessing the opening of schools to society," says Karsenti who holds the Canada Research Chair in Information and Communication Technology in Education. "Students post their work online, read what others have done and can work on projects with students in Korea or Paraguay. It almost seems unfair to other students!"

Karsenti adds that students with laptops write more than average students and seeing as the computer isn't introduced before grade three they still know how to use a good old-fashioned pencil.

The presence of computers clearly affects the teacher-student relationship.

And although students interviewed disapprove of the use of computers in class for any other purpose than learning, teachers must remain interesting or they risk losing their students to Facebook, MSN, or any other distraction that is more appealing than what is happening in the classroom. In addition, teachers can be challenged by students who are fact-checking online what is being taught.

Provided by University of Montreal

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