

## Diversity, Learning and E-technologies: Investigating Youth Involvement with Technology

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**Partners:** Greater Essex County District School Board, Sandwich Teen Action Group, Windsor Public Library and Youth Connections

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### Description

The purpose of this project is to investigate the nature of engagement that ethnic minority students have with e-learning in formal school settings and in the social arenas students occupy outside of the set structures of school; that is, in other parts of their lives outside of schools. Our investigation will include an examination of factors that enhance and/or limit ethnic minority students from meaningful engagement with practices and processes of e-learning within the culture of formal schooling. This project focuses on the human, i.e. social, rather than the technical aspects of the micro-practices associated with e-learning. Further, it takes quite seriously the kinds of capital (cultural/symbolic and material) that are associated with certain ways of engaging with e-technologies. Looking at cultural capital implies investigating what is made possible/available to students by participating in certain kinds of e-technologies. It also involves examining how the engagement with e-technologies is intertwined with identity constructions and negotiations, which are informed by culture and embedded in power relations. Furthermore, anecdotal observation suggests that the exposure to e-technology affects young people in formative ways, reflected in their judgment, their sense of self, how they express their independence and creativity, and in their ability to think systematically. So far, there is little empirical evidence to back this up. Findings from this research will contribute to new thinking about education and the structure of teaching and learning.

Our proposed project will encourage, teach, and be supported by representation forms, "cognition, and expression beyond those language-based forms privileged by the state and school apparatuses which have [often] excluded these youth, specifically in the form of image capture, image editing, image production, narrative production, video production, video editing, and sound production and editing." We begin by acknowledging that while debates about race and ethnicity in the human experience remain contentious, historically, race and ethnicity have been used to allocate resources to certain groups while withholding them from others (Kelly, 1997). Therefore, our investigation is also designed to ensure that ethnic minority students learn and gain meaningful and resourceful ways of engaging with e-technologies so that they rather become beneficiaries of the rewards associated with the booming technology industry than be left out of it.

### Contact

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