



# BE AN INNOVATOR

## STUDENTS WITHOUT BORDERS

### *An innovative camp creates exciting new territory for learning*

In April, the Conseil Scolaire Viamonde's École secondaire Jeunes sans frontières (Youth without Borders School) in Brampton, Ontario, more than lived up to its name when Principal Josée Landriault and her team of dedicated teachers organized a two-day workshop that saw students leaping across the threshold of their comfort zones – with exhilarating results.

Inspired by Microsoft Canada's Camp 21 – an interactive professional development event centered on technology in the classroom that Landriault and fellow teachers had attended the previous fall – the workshop included one day of stimulating cultural activities, followed by a second day of sessions focused on new technologies and programs, all in French and at no cost.

Landriault says that in addition to supporting the school's mandate of promoting the French language, her goal was to inspire leadership: "We wanted the workshops to be an interactive experience with students working with students – that was my vision."

Starting six months prior to the workshop, Landriault and her dedicated group of teachers worked in the wings with students from

grades 9 to 12, helping them acquire the skills needed to take centre stage, including how to lead workshops, facilitate group discussions and act as camp counsellors for younger student participants from grades 5 to 8, who were invited to attend from local feeder schools. All told there were 19 student leaders among 94 workshop participants.

In addition to cultural activities, students could choose from workshops on augmented reality, Microsoft Sway and OneNote, robotics, Skype and coding. For many, it was their first time exploring advanced technologies such as 3D modeling and robotics. Overall, the experience left a lasting impression on teachers and student leaders, who shared great camaraderie over the two days, along with a high regard for the many examples of student ingenuity and leadership.

"My favourite moment was watching the kids learn these new technologies with students from other schools, and seeing them make new friends at the same time," says Alex Demelo, who led the Makey Makey workshop.

For her part, 3D modeling and printing workshop leader Vyvy Ngo, was amazed by one student in her 3D printing workshop who took the production of an ordinary keychain a step further by adding in a mini android figure. "He was able to create something that personalized it for him. It was really nice to see that," she says.


Bila Souza, who led the workshop on augmented reality, was impressed by his group's ability to rapidly apply their learning and transform a flat paper image of a human skeleton into a 3D digital version. "Once we showed them the technology, they ran with it," he says.

The highlight for Sway and OneNote workshop leader Sheeksha Jutton, was when her idea for a team chant based entirely on a mathematical equation was received with a very vocal and enthusiastic response. She was also thrilled with the collegiality of her fellow workshop leaders, noting "they all had such a positive attitude and they demonstrated great leadership abilities."

For teachers, it was gratifying to see students shine. "We had some students who were not performing well academically who were really amazed at what they could do," says teacher Marc Darrouzes.

Teacher Vincent Bénard agreed, noting that girls in the coding workshop also surprised themselves. "The seeds of future careers may have been planted," he says.

Aside from new skills and friends, students also emerged from their experience with a new border-busting attitude. "The workshop made us want to try harder and to take on more challenges," says Demelo. "It helped us break down walls and overcome the fear of learning new technologies."



Are you looking for a new way to inspire your students this year? Register your class for a Youth Spark Camp at: [Microsoft.ca/youthsparkcamps](https://Microsoft.ca/youthsparkcamps) or take them on a virtual fieldtrip at [education.microsoft.com/skypeinthe classroom](https://education.microsoft.com/skypeinthe classroom).