Digital technology: meeting the challenge, providing the support

CSQ survey results
The digital age is redefining the world of work. Given the importance of this issue, the Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ) undertook in spring 2017 a wide-ranging research project on digital technology to inform the development of guidelines and courses of action on the use of these new technologies in education.

Our Centrale is the first in Québec to conduct a widespread survey of its members on the matter.

What was involved?

Some 9,000 members from the seven education sector federations included in the CSQ, namely teaching, professional and support staff working in the school, higher education and private institutions (school and college levels) networks, took part in this survey.

Its objective?

To identify the transformations which result from digital tools in terms of work and workplaces, working conditions as well as the needs and concerns of CSQ members.
What are the survey’s findings?

► **Finding #1**: 97% of all education personnel are in favour of the use of digital tools.

► **Finding #2**: The use of personal technological equipment to carry out professional tasks is a daily reality, as confirmed by 74% of all surveyed members.

► **Finding #3**: Tasks accomplished on one’s own time, outside regular work hours (reading emails, making/answering phone calls, other professional tasks related to digital technology), have increased and significantly increased for 76.5% of all respondents.

► **Finding #4**: Respondents have noted an increase or significant increase in various aspects of their work, namely the diversity of their duties (76%), the control over the execution of their tasks (management of time and process, creating material whether educational or administrative or other) (74%) and the number of tasks to carry out in a specific time period (65%).

► **Finding #5**: Nearly 51% of individuals surveyed consider their skills as extensive and excellent. However, technopedagogical skills received the lowest score. Yet these skills are crucial to support both pupils and students with the use of digital tools so as to allow them to improve their skills as well as produce new knowledge.

► **Finding #6**: A total of 76.5% of respondents report that digital tools have improved or significantly improved, on the one hand, work sharing and collaboration among education personnel and, on the other, communications, namely with colleagues, parents, pupils and students.

► **Finding #7**: Close to 70% of respondents stated having noticed an improvement or a significant improvement in both the motivation and learning of pupils and students due to the use of digital technology.

► **Finding #8**: Among responding members, 77% have identified insufficient time to take ownership of and master various digital tools as the main obstacle to their use.

► **Finding #9**: Close to 70% of respondents have undergone training on the use of digital tools...

► **Finding #10**: ... but they were short training courses focusing on the basics of digital tools. In fact, over 75% of responding members have stated having undergone eight hours or less of training in the past twelve months.
Targeted courses of action

The results of this major survey show that some transformations improved work but that others have had a negative impact on working conditions. To address this situation, respondents have assigned top priority to three courses of action:

1. Allow sufficient time to take ownership of digital tools;
2. Offer training that is adequate, appropriate and recognized;
3. Ensure that the necessary digital tools are accessible to everyone.

Developing a shared vision of digital technology

If Québec hopes to succeed in its transition toward digital technology, it must give priority to the training needs of all education personnel. Given the quick dissemination of digital technologies in the workplace, it has become urgently necessary to develop and share a common vision of the measures that must be implemented in order for the use of digital tools to benefit everyone.

Education workers are key players in the development of the digital skills of children and youngsters, but also of those trying to get into the job market. The government must take this into account in its digital action plan for education.

For more information:
www.lacsq.org/dossiers/education/numerique