Summary of Initial Findings from Technology Task Force Focus Group

(Prepared for Technology Task Force)

0. INTRODUCTION

The initial goals of the Technology Task Force were to:

- ensure that we have a whole school Technology Vision at WAB that is widely communicated, known, shared, tested and confirmed
- help ensure that this vision is happening across the school, and in all classrooms
- facilitate ongoing dialogue between key stakeholders within our school community
- create a narrative of our Technology Vision at WAB.

The Task Force determined that our first undertaking was to examine our current Technology Vision. A sub-group, the Technology Task Force Focus Group, was formed and assigned the following:

- ensure that our current Technology Vision is widely known, shared, tested and confirmed
- raise awareness and understand the vision and how it ties into our daily practice
- examine to what extent our vision is working and understandable
- make recommendations to further address a school wide technology plan.

This report was compiled by the a sub-group of the Technology Task Force Focus Group, the Coding Team.

The Coding Team comprised:
WS: Donna Connolly, Muhammad Azeem
ES: Toni Favilli
MS: Rachella Simon, Trish McNair
HS: Murray Polglase, Jeri Hurd, and Madeleine Brookes

The Technology Task Force Focus Group (Interview Team) comprised:
WS: Donna Connolly, Muhammad Azeem
ES: Doug Taylor, Angela Meikle, John Byrne, Katie Knight
MS: Rachella Simon, Trish McNair, Ray Gentleman, Corrie Salerno, Ken Forde Mike Bott
HS: Jeri Hurd, Madeleine Brookes, Melanie Vrba, Natalie Oberman, Szee-Won Lee

Our Technology Vision:

Below is our current technology vision. This was developed in May 2013 by the WS Technology Integration team led by the School Director.

> *At WAB, technology makes a difference by transforming and enhancing teaching, learning and assessment. Our responsibility is to prepare students for the world they will encounter. We will use technology to…*
>
> - *Connect our community of learners through fostering collaboration and improving communication across the school sections, throughout the school community and beyond.*
> - *Inspire creativity and innovation through new classroom paradigms and instructional models, and promote achievement throughout our learning community.*
> - *Challenge us to accelerate, differentiate and personalize learning, to raise our expectations, to think critically, to become responsible digital citizens, and independent problem solvers.*

1. WHAT WE DID

Time Frame:

1. The interview process ranged from March 2014 to early May 2014
    - Early March: pilot interviews
    - Mid to end of April: faculty interviews
    - Early May: other stakeholders
1. The coding process took place over a two week period in mid-May 2014
2. The “Report 1: Initial Findings” was compiled to present to whole Task Force in late May 2014.

Procedure:

Piloted interview procedure where conducted via three focus groups. The protocol for interviews was developed as follows:

- interview groups were comprised of:
    - ES: Grade Level teams or specialist teams
    - MS & HS: Departmental teams, e.g. Science/Mathematics
- the Technology Vision was emailed to participants prior to the interview
- limited input was given by interviewer (discussion not guided, no clarifications provided, no probing questions, respondents lead the direction)
- a quorum was required in each interview (50% of the team invited to the focus groups)
- interviewer representation from all three sections
- meetings should take place in a quiet space
- use of standardized presentation of the vision (section by section)
- roles defined: interviewer, note-taker, observer (1+)
- post-interview debrief and survey
- ES interviewed by grade level; MS and HS by subject group
- 22 focus groups were interviewed (ES x 4; MS x 7, HS x 6, Parent Link x 1, BMT x 1 and Student Council x 3)
- meetings would last not longer than 30 minutes

Debrief

In addition, after each interview, the interview team debriefed the interview, using specific questions. The purpose of this was to discuss broad impressions of the vision, any immediate needs for the group, and any big picture themes that were raised.

Follow Up Survey

45 participants completed a voluntary follow-up survey following the initial interview (see appendix). This survey provided the opportunity for participants to add further thoughts to the conversation and also to debrief their comfort level regarding the interview process.

Qualitative Data Analysis

- A small sub-group developed coding protocol:
  - codes evolved from group discussion during initial moderation (total codes=37)
  - no codes were added without group discussion
  - Google Form developed to input text and codes
  - coding was completed in pairs
  - internal moderation/inter-rater reliability indicators were done before each section coded
- A total of 787 pieces of text were coded (787 records)
- Text with multiple codes were copied so each text snippet had one code per record, increasing the record total to 1450
- The distribution of the four main sections of the interview that were coded:

Challenge	399
Connect	541
Inspire	315
What can WAB do to help you realize the vision?	195
Grand Total	**1450**

- Coded data was downloaded, cleaned and copied
- Excel, Voyant-tools.org, Tagxedo.com and wordle.net were used to analyze the text.

Challenges/Limitations

- time constraints (e.g. groups didn't have 30 minutes available)
- some groups didn't have a quorum (less than 50%)
- not all interviews had representation from the 3 school sections
- not all interviews had an observer
- some interviewers participated in the discussion
- details of the note-takers varied widely
- some school sections scheduled fewer interviews
- finding common time to meet
- finding a quiet space with limited interruptions
- most but not all interview teams completed the debriefing questions
- most but not all interviewees were sent the follow-up survey

2. WHAT WE FOUND OUT

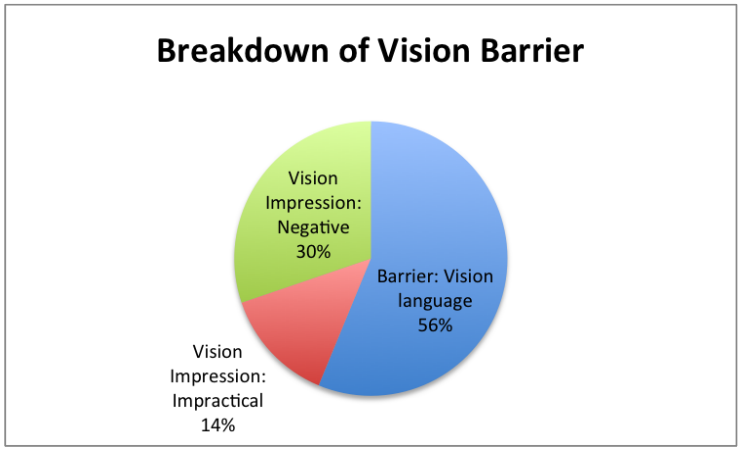
Preliminary Findings

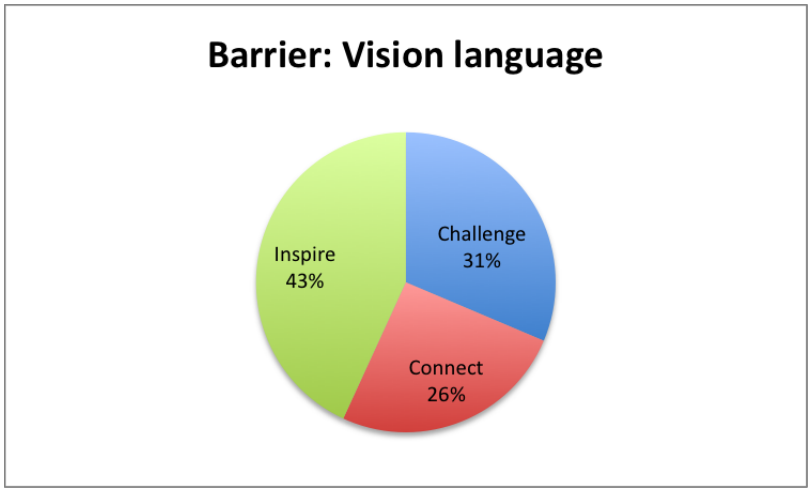
Goal 1: To ensure that our Technology Vision is widely known, shared, tested and confirmed.

1. Vision is **shared** with 49% of the teaching faculty because we shared it explicitly in these meetings. Those in the meetings had direct engagement with the vision's text (22% ES teachers; 98% MS teachers; 48% HS teachers).

2. Vision may or not be **known** by the group. There were 54 instances of *barrier: vision language* being coded (56%).

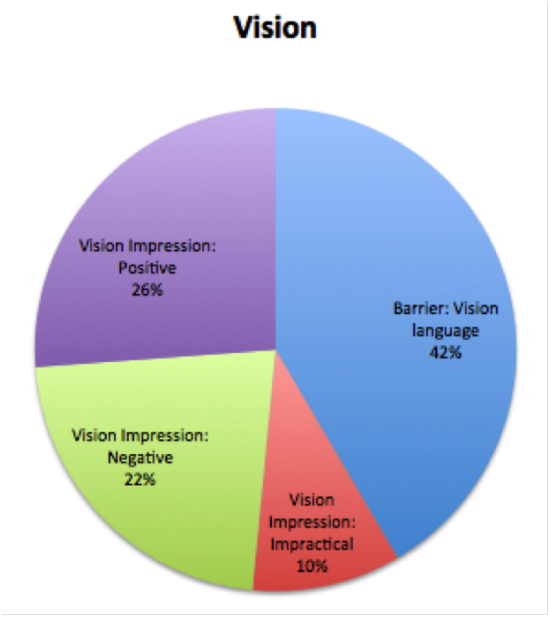
Comments about the vision language were most frequently in the "Inspire" section (43%), followed by "Challenge" (31%) and "Connect" (26%) sections.





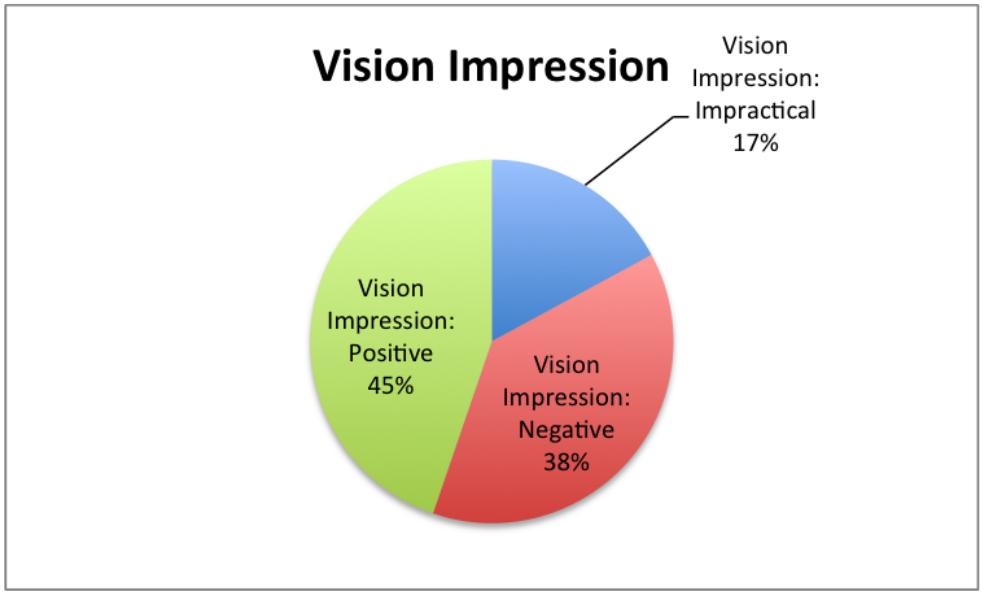
Overall there were 130 instances (**out of 1450)** of where text was coded as relating to the vision. This may reflect that the vision is "known"

3. Vision was **tested** through the interview process and not **confirmed**. There were 130 instances of statements coded to do with vision. 26% *vision impression: positive, 42% barrier: vision language,* 10% *vision impression: impractical*, and 22% *vision: negative*



Goal 2: Raise awareness and understand the vision and how it ties into classroom practice.

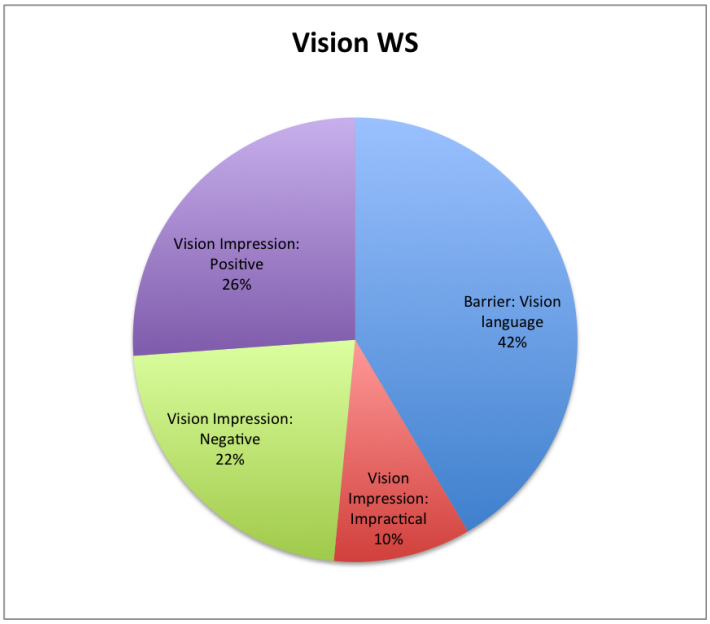
1. The process of the interviews raised awareness of the vision.
2. There were 76 instances of *vision impression* coded in the responses. 45% of those were positive and 55% were negative (negative or impractical).



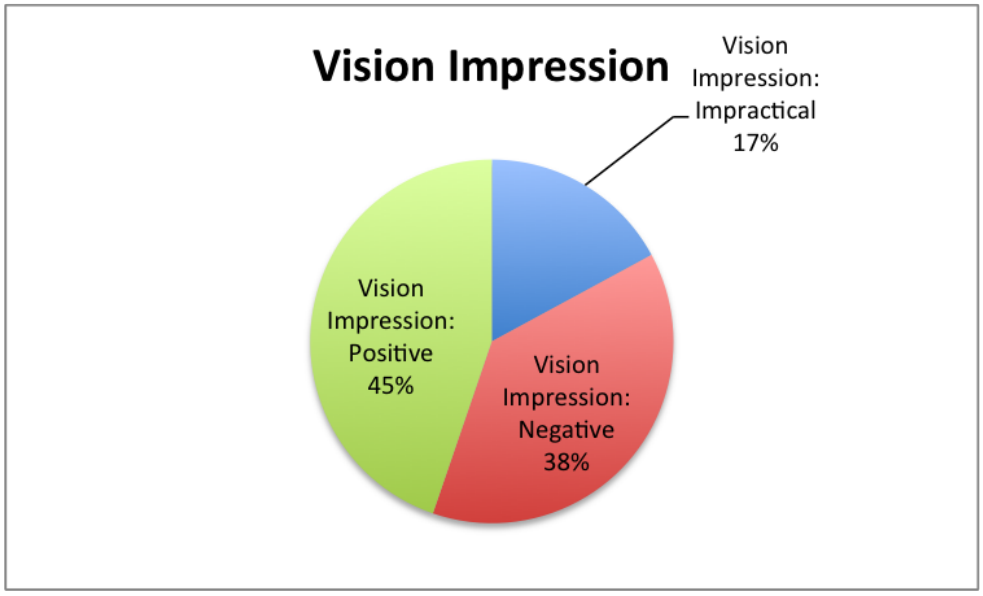
3. Respondents were allowed to direct the conversation as they wished in response to the presentation of each section of the vision. Some respondents choose to share the use of technology in their classroom.
    - There were 284 instances of statements coded to do with tools: 27.5% *barrier: tools* and 72.5% *solution: tools*. There were 222 instances of statements coded to do with procedures: 52.3% *barrier: procedure* and 57.7% *solution: procedure*.

Goal 3: Examine the extent to which our vision is working, understandable. Help us further address a school wide plan.

1. There were some concerns with the language of the vision as shown in the data. Specifically, 42% of all instances that were coded as being related to vision had the impression that there were some barriers created by the specific language of the vision.



2. Some responses indicated that they believed that the vision is not currently happening. Specifically, 38% of all instances that were coded as being related to vision believed that the vision was not currently happening (vision negative).

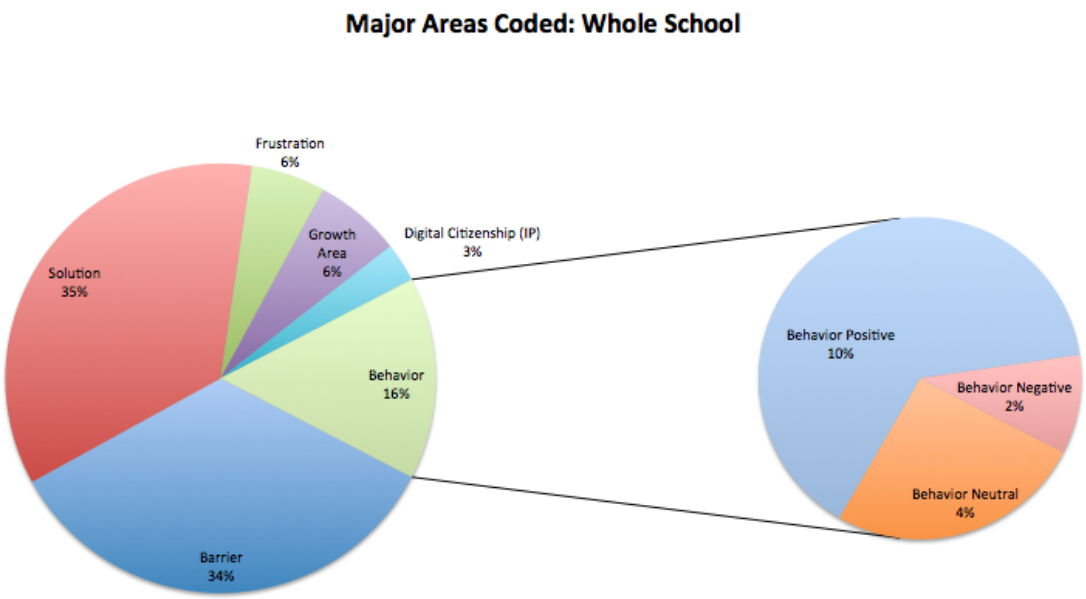


3. 17% of all instances that were coded as relating to the vision indicated that they believed that the vision was impractical.

3. ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

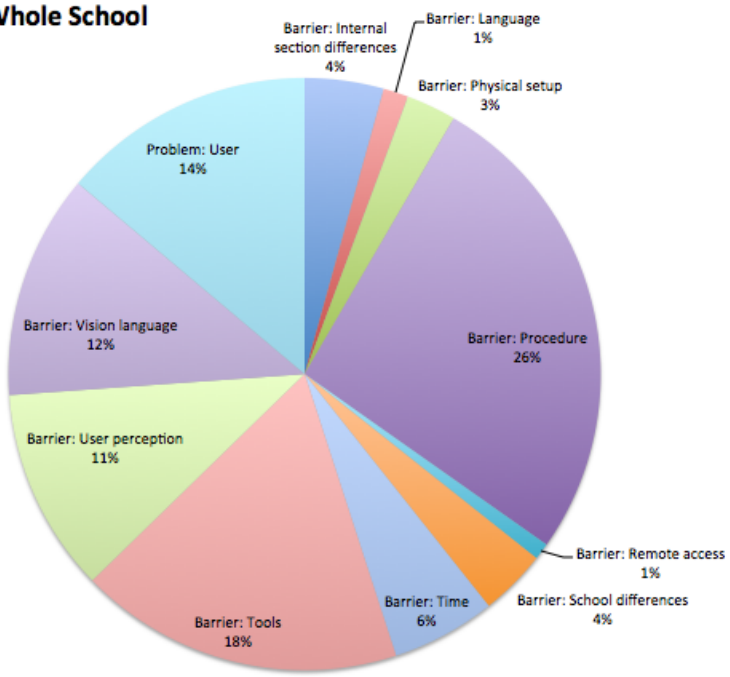
The following are the findings from the major codes derived from the interviews themselves and not the debriefing.

Clearly solutions and barriers were a big part and therefore we need to look more closely at what they said.

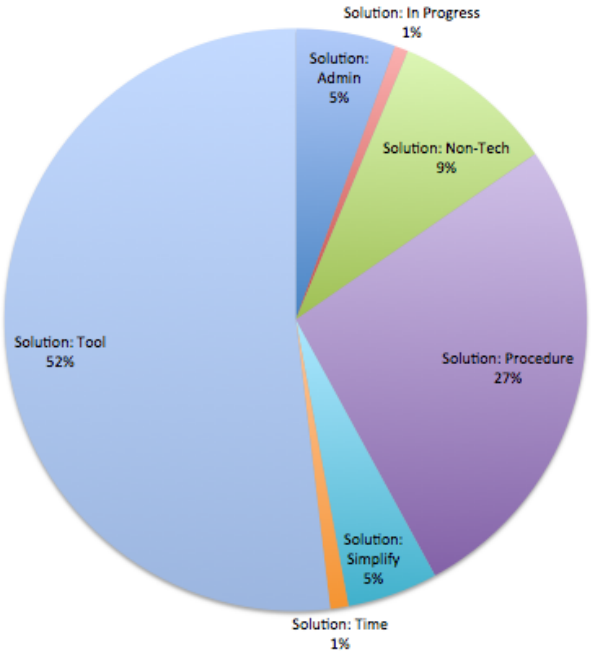


Further breakdown of ‘Barrier’ and ‘Solution’ codes is as follows:

Barriers Coded : Whole School



Solutions Coded: Whole School



The following is a summary of the debriefing notes from the interviews.

THEME	EXAMPLES
VISION	Not practical--need more specific examples Language a barrier (e.g. paradigm) Mixed attitudes--runs the range from very positive to pessimistic
TIME	Shared planning Teacher sharing ideas (x4) Time to play with tools Too much, too fast Too much grading to have time for tech; can marking be more efficient
TRAINING	Digital citizenship/research : Training, whole-school Effective use of 1:1 Using tech effectively More TTT sessions Record TTT sessions for later access How-to videos on school resources
PROCEDURES	Need a central repository for worksheets, resources, etc WS or sectional (Students want MORE tools/options) Hard to find what we need Portal needs better organization Clear vision from SELT-IT of expectations Infrastructure
SIMPLIFY	Too many tools/platforms We need to make better use of what we have Core set of tools, known well
NON-TECH	Personal connection time more important Technology isn't always the answer Need a balance

4. WHERE WE ARE:

Completed Course of Action:

March - May 2014

Step 1. Record data √
Step 2. Label and archive data √
Step 3. Review objectives √
Step 4. Analyze contextual and demographic data √
Step 5. Carefully read data and begin coding √
Step 6. Identify and summarize findings - (Report One--Initial Findings) √

Suggested next steps:

May - June 2014

Step 7. Prepare survey for **confirmation of findings.**

Triangulation of Data:
There are a number of recommendations that we need to confirm with the wider school community. Because the data was qualitatively collected from a sample of people, if would be best to triangulate our findings with the entire school population. It an important step in the research process to confirm our information as we move forward. The team recommends we create a simple survey.

For example, data suggest that *the technology vision in its current form needs simplifying and is not completely embraced*.

As part of our follow-up in the community, we might want to determine:

- Trial a tweaked and/or modified version of the vision (as a separate entity), OR
- Confirm that the vision is implicit in the school mission
- Rank the barriers making the simplified vision
- How to articulate the vision in a strategic plan.

August - September 2014 - Set Interim Small Group Task Force

Step 8. Survey the school population
Step 9. The results of the survey will determine how we proceed with the vision statement. Trial vision, rank or re-rank barriers to implementation, draw conclusions, determine areas for further growth, make recommendations, and prepare draft of "Report Two--Internal Review: Recommendations" to further address a school-wide technology plan at WAB. We should be able to identify the adopted vision, immediate needs, long term development and on-going evaluation in this report.
Step 10. Meet with wider committee to seek feedback and validation of Report Two.
Step 11. **Communicate** Report Two to all stakeholders by end of September 2014. Celebrate and share.

October 2014 - Feb 2015 - Set New Large Group Task Force

Step 12. Based on Report Two:

- adopt a final vision
- address immediate needs
- identify key areas to be addressed and the way forward to resolve these
- commence research phase, by looking at best practices/structures around the world
- develop a detailed, sustainable plan
- develop a set of indicators to help us to continue to measure the effectiveness of our vision
- celebrate and share how our vision is being lived at WAB on an on-going basis (internally and externally)