

TOWARD THE CULTURE OF READING TOGETHER CAMPAIGN

PNA

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

PROJECT BACKGROUND

In Ontario, all grade 10 secondary school students are obligated to take the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), a province-wide standardized literacy test in both reading and writing, organized by Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO). Only the students who complete the test and pass it successfully will earn an Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

Jodi MacDonald, the school literacy lead at St. Joseph's catholic high school in Renfrew, Ontario, requested to improve their current literacy support program for Grade 10 (J. MacDonald, personal communication, January 20, 2020).

Jodi MacDonald, the school literacy lead at St. Joseph's catholic high school in Renfrew, Ontario, requested to improve their current literacy support program for Grade 10.

According to the test result from previous years, the number of unsuccessful students at OSSLT is not increasing despite the current literacy support program. Therefore, she requested to examine why the expected performance is not achieved and ways to achieve it. The desired outcome is having more students obtaining the Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

DATA COLLECTION

The needs were identified through interviews and readings.

- Interviews:

Jodi MacDonald, the sponsor of the literacy support project, was interviewed to gather information on the resources students currently have access to, the difficulties which existing support programs face and how teachers are supporting students currently.

An interview with Julie Corrigan, a Subject Matter Expert, was conducted to learn about the support programs and teaching strategies. She also provided detailed descriptions of a typical student in each stream.

- Research Papers

To learn about the subject, I read several research papers about the Ontario educational system, the roles of various members at schools, boards, and ministry (Ferguson, 2014; Lynch & Alsop, 2007). Also, I was able to gather information about the reading habits of high school students who are located in rural areas similar to St. Joseph's from the paper by Whitten et al. (2016) about the impact of pleasure reading.

- Online Publications:

From the EQAO website, I was able to obtain the OSSLT report of St. Joseph's school (EQAO School and School Board Profiles and Reports, 2019). I also reviewed several publications from the Ministry of Education regarding the OSSLT scoring guides and some strategies (The Ontario Curriculum: English, the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC), Grade 12, 2003).

- Multimedia Resources:

Several of the videos produced by Fisher et al. (2016) provided practical models for best practices in literacy education.

ABOUT THE PROBLEM

THE REQUEST

Jodi MacDonald (2020), the school literacy lead at St. Joseph's catholic high school, requested to improve their current literacy support program to increase the success rate of OSSLT.

THE BUSINESS NEED

The business need of this mandate is to contain expenses. By increasing the student success rate at OSSLT, St. Joseph's catholic high school can reduce the expenses related to (a) offering the supplementary course, Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC), and (b) retaking the exam for the students who were unsuccessful at OSSLT. These contingency plans require teachers to work extra hours and to secure facilities as well as more amount of production of teaching materials (J. Corrigan, personal communication, February 26, 2020)

In spite of the existing literacy support program, the St. Joseph's OSSLT reports posted by EQAO from 2014 to 2018 indicates that the average percentage of students passing the test has fallen from 90.1% to 80.5% as indicated by the findings of the Fraser Institute's school ranking system (Fraser Institute-School Rankings. Retrieved from School Rankings, 2020). There are three streams in

Ontario high school system, academic stream for those who want to continue studying in the universities, applied stream for those who want to obtain technical skills at post-secondary institutions such as community colleges, and workplace stream for those who want to go directly in the job market after graduation from high school. MacDonald (2020) stated that in her school, while 90% of students in the academic stream pass the test, however, only 50% of students in the applied stream receive a passing grade. Her team found out that those who fail, most of them do by a small margin, for instance, one wrong multiple-choice question. This means that a small push will make them succeed and that is why the support program will target the applied stream students.

MacDonald (2020) observes, however, that teachers are struggling to get students motivated in developing their literacy skills. They are simply not interested because their surroundings are not teaching the value of reading. Because the environment plays a crucial role in students' value map, she believes having a student-centred learning environment at school where students are encouraged to practice reading and writing with ownership would help them improve their literacy skills significantly.

CURRENT & IDEAL PERFORMANCE

CURRENT PERFORMANCE

Lisa is 30 years old and a teacher at St. Joseph's catholic high school since 2009. She participates in the literacy support program of the school, where several teachers gathered to give extra literacy support courses for students who need help to succeed in OSSLT. Most of the time the focus of these courses is on the effective delivery of the support class, and each teacher teaches one of the various test areas, such as inferences, topic sentences, short answers, graphic text and implicit reading, etc. These are extra classes to teach on top of their regular classes. Lisa is in charge of a multiple-choice (MC) questions class.

In her support class, she only has 30 minutes to teach. Therefore, as soon as students are seated, she starts the class by briefly stating the subject area, learning objectives and the agenda of the class. Without having the chance to check if students understood, she demonstrates how to solve MC questions using the think-out-loud method. As much as she wants to discuss with students to give individual feedback and encouragement, she is also very stressed with covering the important skills based on the OSSLT grading guideline. Since the success in the test has a more immediate effect on them, she does not want to divert their attention. As a result, her class is teacher-centred and her focus is on skills to avoid mistakes.

Despite her effort in making the practice activity interesting, she notices many of her students are neither motivated nor sincerely participating in the activities. With the limited time of her class, she cannot do much to engage with them.

After the lecture is over, she wraps up the class by summarizing the key skills and distributes handouts that can help students remember and apply them in the real test. Sometimes she gives them more practice materials to do at home on her Google classroom page. However, most students do not submit their work to be reviewed because these are not graded.

IDEAL PERFORMANCE

Mary is 48 years old and a teacher at St. Joseph's catholic high school since 2001. She is one of the lead in literacy support initiatives and their goal is by engaging with students and building relationships with them, nurturing a safe environment for students to read and write together (Fisher et al., 2016). The focus of this goal is not only improving students' OSSLT grades but also building literacy skills for life.

Therefore, to understand what motivates students, she meets with students one on one and has casual conversations to get to know each other at the beginning of the school year (Starke, 2020). She makes notes after the meeting and tries to remember

the details so that students realize that she cares about them. She keeps the connection by asking about some updated news on their life events during breaks, outside the classrooms too. Once she builds a trust-based relationship with them, they pay more attention to her instructions because they do not want to disappoint her (Fisher et al., 2016).

Based on these interactions with each of them, she mentors the students closely especially those who are reluctant to read to choose a book that is interesting enough to read on their own. She then time to time throws open-ended questions about the books to keep them interested (Baigelman, 2019). She also fills her classroom with many books that are culturally relevant and diverse genres in coordination with the school librarian. Next to the bookshelf, she places a board called 'what I am reading', where anyone can recommend a book (Barrett, 2019). Similarly, she creates a social media page where students can recommend books to each other. She encourages her students to choose interesting books for themselves to foster the ownership of reading.

In her class, she makes sure that everyone knows the purpose and the expectation of the lesson at the beginning of each class. She also provides immediate feedback to encourage students to continue working in the right direction. Occasionally, she asks students to bring their own choice of literature, anything they like to read in the class, such as news articles, recipes, instructions, etc. Then, she takes one or two of them, using the reciprocal teaching method, identifies what the topic sentence is, how they can make the summary in a sentence, and so on. This helps her to observe those who have similar interests and often pair them together for group activities, such as making their own questions from their text for the rest of the class to solve. Students work with more ownership too. However, when some students are not familiar with the topic, she presents clearly the new terms in 5W1H, so that everyone has the same level of basic knowledge before going into deeper learning (Fisher et al., 2016).

When the OSSLT date is approaching, she organizes preparation workshops as well as an event where students who already took the test successfully share their experiences and answer some questions from the audience. She believes it encourages students and reduces their stress from OSSLT more effectively because students tend to give more attention to listen to peers' useful advice and the experienced students could empathize with them better than teachers. This will also help to build the community stronger.

She also organizes a fun event on World Book Day every year. Some of the teachers dress up as characters from popular books (Barrett, 2019) and students can guess who they are. They give prizes to winners to encourage participation. She loves this celebration because it constructs a positive experience associated with reading.

HIERARCHICAL LIST OF TASKS

CURRENT PERFORMANCE

Main Tasks	Supporting Tasks
1. Plan the literacy support class schedule of the year	A. Set up a goal and strategies for the new school year based on the results from the previous years B. Divide the work and identify the role of each teacher
2. Teach one of the various test areas, such as inferences, topic sentences, short answers, graphic text and implicit reading, focusing on test-taking skills to prepare for OSSLT	A. Briefly state the subject area, learning objectives and the agenda of the class. B. Based on the OSSLT grading guidelines, give a teacher-centred lecture, focusing on test-taking skills for multiple-choice questions. a. Use the think-out-loud method to demonstrate how to solve a sample question b. Direct students to solve exercise questions in groups c. Summarize the key skills learned d. Distribute handouts that help students remember what they have learned in class e. Provide more exercise questions on Google Classroom for extra practice

IDEAL PERFORMANCE

Main Tasks	Supporting Tasks
1. By increased casual interactions with students, build a positive relationship with them and get to know each other	A. Find out general interest in life to better understand what motivates students B. Write down the details to remember and build trust C. Carry out casual conversations on different occasions to keep the relationship close
2. Based on the information from the casual interactions with them, mentor students to read books on their own	A. Present two or three books that might interest each student with a help of a literacy coach B. Keep the interest high on the book by asking open-ended questions about the book content or the topic
3. At the beginning of each class, communicate the purpose and expectation clearly to the students	A. Display the purpose clearly on the board and repeatedly draw attention to it B. Display the expectations clearly on the board and repeatedly draw attention to it C. Provide feedback immediately to keep students on the right path
4. In a given class, provide students choices and equal chances to engage them in the lesson	A. Give students a choice to bring any literature that interests them in the class B. Use student selected materials to do regular class activities to engage with them C. Give students a chance to teach the class by asking them to come up with their own questions for the rest of the class
5. A month before the OSSLT, organize a student-centred event that can build a strong community of learners	A. Invite students who have successfully passed OSSLT from grade 11-12 who can share their experiences B. Promote peer interaction to encourage each other and reduce stress
6. Develop a school-wide atmosphere where reading books is highly valued to nurture the culture of reading that could last for life	A. Display up-to-date and culturally relevant books throughout the school environment B. Celebrate World Book Day to build a positive experience with books C. Adjust the book collection of classrooms based on the interest of each class D. Place a "What I am reading" board where students can easily find in the classroom E. Create a social media page where students share interesting books and comment on them

JOB ONE

St. Joseph's Catholic High School teachers will initiate quality interactions with students and create engaging activities so that the success rate at OSSLT increases 20% in 2 years

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

DESCRIPTION OF PERFORMERS

LESS MOTIVATED

Megan

Megan is a teacher with 30 years of experience in teaching high school students. Although she believes pleasure reading links to academic achievement, she thinks there is not much she can do with her students. Every year, she sees her students are more and more occupied with their online activities and their heavy usage of abbreviations is making her feel like an outsider. Besides, some of her students have practically no time to read at home since they have jobs or club activities and some others are already burnt out with class reading materials (Whitten et al., 2019), she does not push harder but teaches them what is required for graduation which is already a lot of work. As an older teacher close to retirement, the demand from the school to integrate new technologies into the class activity seems fun but it is overwhelming for her.

Camille

Camille is a grade 10 homeroom teacher at St. Joseph's catholic high school since 2018. She has two young children at home and recently divorced. Her day outside of school hours pass quickly with taking care of her children. She is always tired and keeps falling behind her work schedule. She has less time and effort to spend time with her students because her life is in turmoil. She hopes to get an assistant teacher and also needs more help from the school literacy coach to take care of her students. She doesn't have time to catch up with news around the world, new studies about literacy teaching, or learn new technologies for effective teaching. In fact, to keep her life easier, she is not motivated to try new things. She is afraid to lose control of the class, which is the last thing she wants to deal with.

MODERATELY MOTIVATED

Christian

Christian is a grade 10 homeroom teacher at St. Joseph's catholic high school since 2010. He is an experienced teacher and well respected by teachers and students. Although he observed students who enjoy reading independently get better grades, he does not believe the correlation is empirically proven (Whitten et al., 2019). Therefore, he believes traditional teacher-centred teaching is still the best way to organize classrooms as well as prepare students for life.

Nancy

Nancy is a new history teacher at St. Joseph's catholic high school. She just graduated from university and this is her first job as a teacher. She was excited to start her career but she finds it challenging in Renfrew. Since she is brought up in Toronto all her life, her students' rural lifestyle is not something that she can easily connect with. She finds it hard to empathize with some students, especially when they talk about hunting. When she presents important world issues like the human rights movement as reading material in the class, the indifferent reaction from students makes her class very inanimate. This cultural gap is not helping Nancy to build a relationship with her students and she needs to consult with literacy lead often for help (Ferguson, 2014). Unless she sees any incentives from the school for working overtime, she is not motivated to participate in extra hours of giving literacy classes.

HIGHLY MOTIVATED

Johnathan

Johnathan is a grade 10 homeroom teacher at St. Joseph's catholic high school since 2010. He is one of the literacy support program teachers and it is where he has his passion. He reads more and more research articles that find the correlations between literacy skills and success in life, and he believes that good literacy skill is the foundation of a country's economic performance (Willms et al., 1997). He believes that the reading habits of students influence their level of achievement more than their socio-economic status and their parents' education level (Whitten et al., 2019). Therefore, he tries hard to get more teachers to participate and have the same vision

Susan

Susan is a literacy lead and a grade 10 homeroom teacher at St. Joseph's catholic high school since 2018. As a leader of the literacy support program team, she organizes meetings with teachers to identify their long-term literacy goals (Lynch & Alsop, 2007). She strongly supports this idea about building a culture of reading at St. Joseph and puts a lot of effort to meet with teachers as often as possible, for she believes that collaboration and teamwork among the teachers are essential to achieve this goal. She also meets with the principal regularly to update her and get her support. Because all grade 10 teachers are under a lot of stress from the OSSLT, moreover, one size does not fit all, the school needs to provide various tools for teachers to meet their performance targets. Therefore, Susan sees that it is her critical function to make the principal approve of new directions and the cost to achieve them. Although she wishes her workload be reduced so that she could focus on her role as the literacy lead, she is proud of her literacy support program team and does not want to disappoint them.

CONTEXT OF PERFORMERS

Table below states my findings of the performance issues in the environment and individual context, based on Gilbert's Behaviour Engineering Model (BEM) (Stolovitch & Keeps, 2004)

<i>Environment</i>	Information	Resources	Incentives/Consequences
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of solid direction on literacy education resulted in divided opinions on what works for students • Lack of communication with students regarding the importance of literacy in successful future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of data on students general interest in books and life and reading habits • Lack of collaboration with a literacy coach • Lack of resources to organize interesting events that could positively interact with students • Lack of collaboration with the school librarian • Lack of up-to-date, culturally relevant and diverse books in the library 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of incentives for working overtime
<i>Individual</i>	Knowledge and Skills	Capacity	Motivation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of seminars to get updated with recent research about ways to improve literacy • Lack of social media skills • Lack of social skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each teacher has a different teaching style, different weaknesses and strengths • Lack of time • The cultural gap between teacher and students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not willing to risk class management issues • Feels limited by the stress from OSSLT • Lack of confidence in motivating students to read books for pleasure

Based on Behaviour Engineering Model (BEM)

CONSTRAINTS

PROJECT CONSTRAINTS

Budget limitation

Purchasing new books for the library

Hiring a full-time literacy coach

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Time limitation

Some teachers do not have enough hours to meet with students to have a deeper understanding and regular meetings with teachers

Some students are not available for extra reading because of their jobs or extra-curricular activities

In many schools, literacy coaches are not available for the whole school year

Quality guidelines

Should follow OSSLT grading guidelines from EQAO

PRODUCT CONSTRAINTS

Guidelines

Guidelines to effectively interview students

Guidelines to build a relationship with students

Guidelines to analyze the collected data

List of recommended books per topic and level of literacy

Guidelines for healthy online interactions such as using social media, for teachers to connect with students

THE BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

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By increasing 20% of the OSSLT success rate among applied stream students, St. Joseph's Catholic High School will contain expenses related to (a) offering the supplementary course, Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC), and (b) retaking the exam for the students who failed OSSLT.

Business Objectives

THE REQUIREMENTS

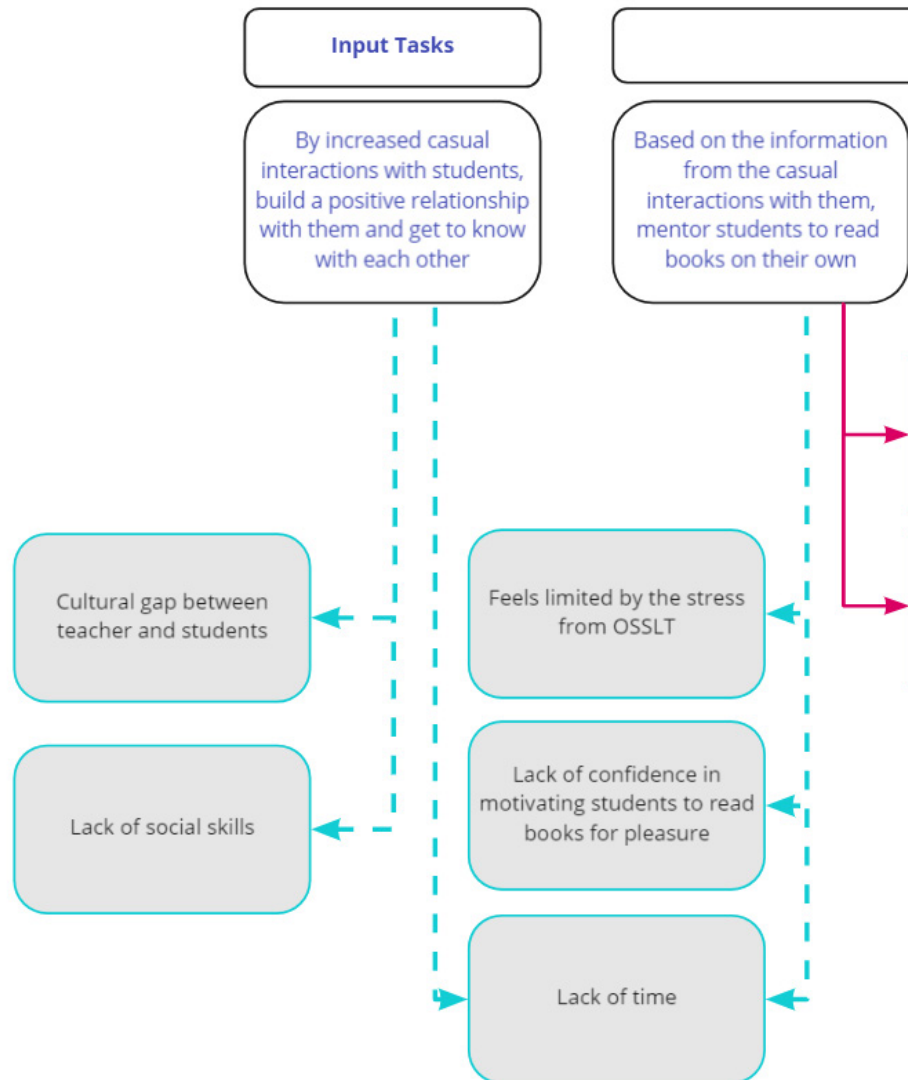
Performance Objectives

- 1 By increased casual interactions with students, build a positive relationship with them and get to know each other
 - 2 Based on the information from the casual interactions with them, mentor students to read books on their own
 - 3 At the beginning of each class, communicate the purpose and expectation clearly to the students
 - 4 In a given class, provide students choices and equal chances to engage them in the lesson
 - 5 A month before the OSSLT, organize a student-centred event that can build a strong community of learners
 - 6 Develop a school-wide atmosphere where reading books is highly valued to nurture the culture of reading that could last for life
-

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES TO ADDRESS

- Many different schools of thoughts between teachers could create inconsistencies in mentoring students (Whitten et al., 2019)
- Teachers strike in Ontario could influence the healthy relationship with students (Crawley, 2020)
- Parents' background and their value on reading books could interfere with the receptivity of students (Whitten et al., 2019; Willms et al., 1997)
- Students' busy daily schedule can be an obstacle to develop a reading culture at home (Whitten et al., 2019)

The cause analysis map below provides analysis on issues that cause bottlenecks in the performance of the target performers. This analysis presents the work process in a flow and indicates what issues that prevent achieving job one are currently occurring and their locations.



THE CAUSE ANALYSIS

JOB ONE:

St. Joseph's Catholic High School teachers will initiate quality interactions with students and create engaging activities so that the success rate at OSSLT increases 20% in 2 years.

Tasks

At the beginning of each class, communicate the purpose and expectation clearly to the students

In a given class, provide students choices and equal chances to engage them in the lesson

A month before the OSSLT, organize a student-centered event that can build a strong community of learners

Output Tasks

Develop a school wide atmosphere where reading books is highly valued to nurture the culture of reading that could last for life

Lack of collaboration with literacy coach and librarian

Lack of communication with students regarding the importance of literacy in successful future

Each teacher has a different teaching style, different weaknesses and strengths

Not willing to risk class management issues

Lack of social media skills

LEGEND: Bottleneck

Individual

Environmental

Lack of data on students general interest and reading habits

Lack of up-to-date culturally relevant and diverse books in the library

Lack of resources to organize interesting events that could positively interact with students

Lack of incentives for working overtime

SUMMATIVE EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Based on Kirkpatrick's modified four levels of evaluation model (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2009), summative evaluations will be conducted to gather information on the effectiveness of the performance improvement campaign. This analysis will measure the engagement of performers and the achievements of the desired goals at the individual and organizational levels.

Engagement levels 1 and 2

The evaluation of the performer's level of engagement in the performance improvement campaign will be conducted. At the end of the interventions, the teacher's reaction to the interventions will be evaluated with a simple smiley sheet. The evaluation for their knowledge and skills will be conducted twice, pre- and post-intervention to compare and measure the effectiveness (Korth, 2001).

Individual performance levels 2 and 3

The evaluation of teacher's individual performance will be assessed in several different ways. One way to evaluate the level of engagement with students will be assessed by observation or by conducting interviews after the intervention to get qualitative data. Collected data from observation notes and interviews will be broken down into skills to measure the effectiveness.

Another way is surveying areas such as presenting clear purpose and expectations, number of feedbacks, frequency of student teaching, etc. This survey will be done at the pre- and post-intervention to analyze the gap.

Organizational performance level 4

The organizational performance data will be collected after the OSSLT result is published from the EQAO. The report will identify how much percentage of students were successful at the test and this data will be used to calculate return on investment to see how much funding was contained at the year-end.

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**HUMAN
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