

O'GORMAN STUDENTS GO SHOPPING IN RARE OPPORTUNITY TO STOCK THEIR CLASSROOM LIBRARY

A group of students at O'Gorman High School in Timmins had a rare opportunity to help design their course, which included an educational field trip to the local Coles The Book People store at the Timmins Square. Their assignment: stock the classroom with reading materials of their interest. Each student was encouraged to select fifty dollars worth of novels, magazines, and informational books that they would enjoy reading.

The participating students are enrolled in the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC). The course was designed to provide students with an opportunity to achieve the literacy graduation requirements normally obtained through the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). Students enrolled in the course receive intensive support in achieving reading and writing competencies through alternative means of demonstrating their literacy skills. The course requirements parallel the expectations on the OSSLT. It is a full credit Grade 12 course which may be used to meet the Grade 12 English compulsory credit requirement or as an additional optional credit requirement.



Students were excited to learn that they would be choosing their own 'textbooks'. Grade twelve student Josée has enrolled in the course for her own reasons. She wants to be a professional writer and sees this as a chance to further improve the quality of her writing. "I hope to get a better understanding of literacy styles and develop a basic foundation," explained Josée. "I started writing fantasy fiction in grade seven, but when I look at it, I don't feel that it is good enough to be published. I want to be able to refine my style and improve what I write so that it can be published." She is also thrilled that her classroom will have books that she enjoys, including fantasy fiction and biographies. "Normally, I don't have a lot of money to play with when buying books for myself, and I can rarely get the books that I want," added Josée. "This semester, I can make sure that some of these books are available in my classroom and for others to read."

O'Gorman Teacher Andrew Swartz who teaches the OSSLC believes that students will benefit greatly from resources on subjects that correspond to their interests. "Few classes have the chance to stock their own classroom," stated Swartz. "Because they will have selected the materials in the class library, they will benefit from more meaningful learning experiences. They are more likely to look forward to and complete reading and comprehension assignments. This enhanced commitment to their studies will help them strengthen their literacy skills, which will improve their ability to meet curriculum expectations in all subject areas. This course will have a real impact on these students as they strive to gain proper literacy skills and graduate from high school."

Funding for this unique idea was made available through the Board's Student Success Initiative, which seeks to develop programs that will ensure that all students can be successful.

For more information, please contact Mélanie Bidal-Mainville, Community Relations Officer



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