

Completed by: Durham District School Board
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**“The Impact of Focused
Data Driven Literacy test
Preparation on Student
OSSLT Success Rates”**

“The Impact of Focused Data Driven Literacy test Preparation on Student OSSLT Success Rates” Final Report: G.L. Roberts C.V.I.

Completed by: Durham District School Board
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Essential Questions:

1. What is the impact of improved student literacy preparation initiatives for male students taking English at the applied level on student OSSLT test results and school OSSLT test results?
2. Will demonstrating effective use of OSSLT result data help build capacity in enhancing literacy preparation initiatives within G. L. Roberts C. V. I. staff and throughout DDSB schools?

Background:

We came to study this issue at G. L. Roberts C. V. I. due to a continued need to improve the OSSLT success rates for all students, and particular those of the male students taking English at the applied level.

The school has traditionally engaged in a variety of literacy test preparations. These initiatives included:

1. Silent Reading Breaks
2. Incorporating the OSSLT model within assessment practices and lessons
3. Four literacy lessons: Delivered in Grade Ten classes. These were evaluated by the classroom teacher. The lessons took the following formats: news report, three paragraph opinion piece, graphic text, and narrative text.
4. Literacy Practice Test (November): Taking place over two periods like the real OSSLT, the test is meant to simulate as closely as possible the OSSLT. Students completed all tasks.
5. Literacy Practice Test score analysis: The Literacy Committee scored the tests using the EQAO rubrics.

6. Literacy Remediation Sessions: The Literacy Committee implemented remediation lessons for FTE students scoring under 70% on the practice literacy test. The lessons took place over two weeks, with each student completing a full morning and a full afternoon session. The morning sessions focused on writing and the afternoon sessions focused on reading tasks.
7. Literacy Rewrite Sessions: The same lessons as above, but these students were selected because of previous lack of success on the OSSLT.
8. Literacy Spring Training: All FTE students writing the test were invited to the library for a half day session of fun, interactive review activities.
9. Phone script for publicity campaign: Every family of a student writing the OSSLT was contacted by members of the Literacy Committee to provide the date and tips for the test.
10. Grade Ten Class visits: Members of the Literacy Committee visited Grade Ten homerooms to provide information and answer questions about the OSSLT.
11. Literacy Breakfast and Snacks

Despite the above initiatives, we noticed through our data analysis that the achievement gap between male and female students continues to grow.

Data Collection Methods and Analysis:

Our research project was carried out over the school year using the following methods:

1. Reviewing OSSLT Results: Through an analysis of our school results we determined that male students, specifically those taking English at the applied level, had the greatest need. These results were shared with both the Literacy Committee and the staff as a whole (September 2007).

2. Reviewing School Literacy Preparation Initiatives: We reviewed our existing OSSLT preparation initiatives to further improve our OSSLT results (September 2007).

3. Introducing New Initiatives, "Gift A Book"

As a result of the research conducted through our MISA project, and in light of the data returned, an initiative was undertaken to address the short fall in male literacy scores through making available a variety of reading materials. The protocol requested that staff members donate from their personal collections any novels, non-fiction reading materials, magazines, comic issues or graphic novels that they no longer had any use for, which would appeal to applied males. The collection and organization of the reading resources was undertaken three weeks in advance of the day itself, dubbed "Gift-a-book". Publicity was generated for this event through posters as well as multiple announcements as part of the daily regimen of the school. During the lunch hour, three large tables were overseen by members of the Literacy Committee and students were permitted to browse through the offerings available. They were able to exchange

a book they had selected earlier up until the end of the lunch hour. The number of resources acquired by this endeavour were all selected by students. Anecdotally, many of them were seen in silent reading during the week, with the materials they had selected from the programme. (May 2008)



4. Introducing New Initiatives, "Introduction to Differentiated Instruction"

Staff were introduced to the concept of DI during several PD in-services. The follow-up to these sessions included staff attempting DI lesson planning, with a special focus on Grade Ten classes. (Ongoing)

5. Introducing New Initiatives, "Creativity Club Anthology"

The Creativity Club met weekly to produce original pieces of writing and to support each other's writing process. Through a liaison with members of the Literacy Committee, an anthology of student work was published. Members of this club included several males, many working at the applied level. These students participated in a Coffee House launch party at which they read their works and promoted literacy in the community. (December 2007)

6. Introducing New Initiatives, "Graphic Novel / Manga Club"

As an additional aspect of the out-reach protocols for the applied males, the school's graphic novel club was revived in the second semester after a brief year's hiatus. The Graphic Novel Club's mandate is to meet every other week and provide students with the access to graphic novels in library circulation, as well as a venue to discuss and share their opinions and impressions of the different works, ranging from the traditional "Big Two" companies, D.C. and Marvel, to Japanese Manga and independently published comics. A large variety is present in the selection available through the library as well as items brought in from the staff liaison's personal collection. (February – June 2008)

7. Eliminating unsuccessful Initiatives, "You've Been Booked"

This contest was eliminated because the original intent was to "catch" some students reading but the result was that staff wanted to foster everyone's reading rather than focusing on a few, individual readers. (March 2008)

8. Report to MISA: MISA team developed report to MISA, to assist other schools within the DDSB and MISA. (October 2008)

Results and Findings:

Summary of Results:

1. Detailed School Practice Literacy Test Analysis: The Practice Test was written by 185 students, both FTE and PE. The following results were noted:

Results	% of Students
Level 4	0
Level 3 (Pass)	12
Level 2	18
Level 1	11
Below Level 1	59

2. Detailed School OSSLT Result Analysis:

i. Looking at the 2007-2008 OSSLT first time eligible (FTE) results, we had a 95% participation rate, the second highest in the last five years. This rate is 2% lower than the DDSB, but 2% higher than the province.

ii. Of the 152 FTE, 77 (51%) were female and 75 (49%) were male.

iii. Of the 152 FTE, 53 (35%) were students taking English at the academic level and 87 (57%) were taking English at the applied level, and 11 (7%) were in Locally Developed English classes.

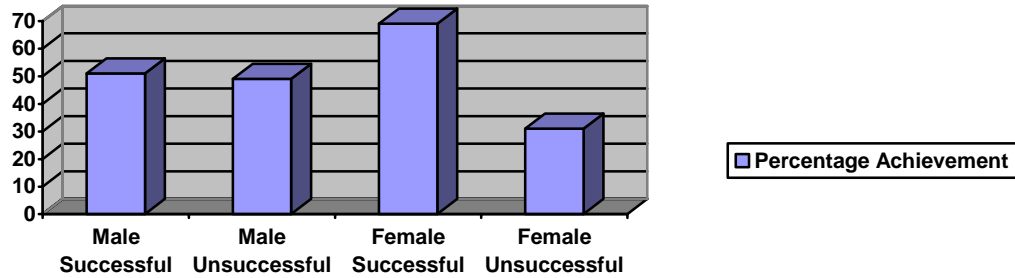
iv. The results of the FTE were 62% successful and 32% unsuccessful. By level the data yields the following results: 89% of students taking Academic level were successful, 53% of students taking Applied level were successful, and 9% of students taking Locally Developed classes were successful.

v. In terms of gender, 80% of females were successful while 52% of males were successful.

vi. Moving beyond the participation rate to the rates of success the following results can be extracted from the data: of the 87 students taking Applied level courses, the following results were yielded: 27 males (51%) were successful, 26 males (49%) were unsuccessful, 20 females (69%) were successful and 9

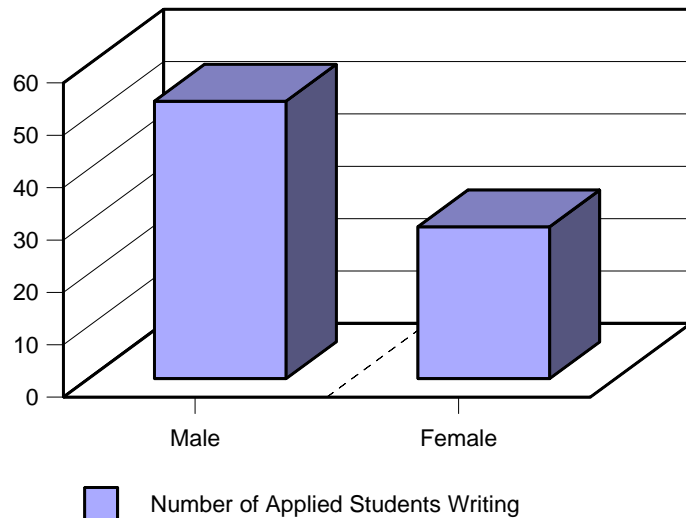
females (31%) were unsuccessful. There were two deferrals and three absences.

Percentage Achievement by Gender



The achievement level of females is significantly better than males. When one considers that there are nearly twice as many males as females (53 versus 29) at the applied level, the achievement gap is compounded.

Number of Applied Students Participating by Gender



2. Analysis of Participation in School Interventions: Attendance at the four literacy interventions was tracked and compared to results on the OSSLT. There were fifty three males working at the applied level. Of these, twenty seven were successful. All twenty seven (100%) attended at least half of the interventions, with the majority (85%) attending three or four. In contrast, twenty one of the twenty six who were unsuccessful attended less than half the interventions, with the majority (90%) attending only one or fewer. There were five students who were exceptions to this. They attended all four interventions but remained unsuccessful.

The results for female students were similar, with 100% (20) of the successful applied female students attending three or more interventions. The unsuccessful female applied students (9) attended one or fewer.

3. Report to MISA: Our MISA team developed report to MISA, to assist other schools within the DDSB and MISA (July 2007). A key finding was that we identified the need to streamline data collection to support sustainability eg: use of attendance v. survey to identify participation in preparation activities. By spending most time on analysis of pre-test data, school and individual student reports we could identify trends in student needs and effectiveness of programs.

Reflections and Action:

1. Department Heads and staff appreciate the need for data informed leadership, Through use of Karen Hume's, Start Where They Are: Differentiating for Success with the Young Adolescent and Tomlinson and McTighe's Integrating Differentiated Instruction and Understanding by Design. Staff has and continues to implement ideas from these books to promote literacy through differentiated instruction.
2. We refined the use of data to include an analysis of both gender and level.
3. Our research confirmed that current preparation initiatives are making a difference for our students' OSSLT success rates. This has encouraged staff to continue supporting these initiatives.
4. Our Literacy Committee is using data to review and revise preparation initiatives both during the year (using pre-test to adapt preparation) and based on OSSLT reports each June. We are now doing the pre-test one month earlier, in October rather than November. In addition, we have introduced a Grade Nine practice test to be written May 2009.
5. Data indicated the need to revise our school deferral process. We will continue to monitor this process in the 2008-2009.
6. We hope to identify additional successful strategies for improving our students' OSSLT success through the MISA project results of other schools and boards. These successful strategies will be brought to the attention of our Literacy Committee for implementation.

Contributions to MISA Professional Network Centre:

We hope our improved OSSLT preparation strategies for applied males and results can assist other schools and boards in improving their OSSLT success rates. We also hope to learn from others through the MISA network.

Suggestions for Future Research:

We would like to continue our current process and introduce intensive intervention and explicit instruction for Grade Ten applied male students. We would welcome the opportunity to continue this project at least into the 2008-2009 school year. A connection with our Family of Schools (feeder schools) in this initiative would be interesting and could pay dividends in student OSSLT success as literacy development occurs over a continuum.