



:: ontario school library association

Language, Grades 1-8/English, Grades 9-12 Information Gathering Guiding Questions

Submitted by the Ontario Library Association and The Association of Library Consultants and Coordinators of Ontario, April 2022

What are the strengths of the Language, Grades 1-8 curriculum and the English, Grades 9 – 12 curricula? Please provide a rationale.

The front matter ‘The Role of the School Library’ of the current Language, Grades 1-8 curriculum and the English, Grades 9 – 12 curricula acknowledges the fundamental role of the school library program in enabling students to develop information and literacy skills that are central to supporting the languages curricula.

It is noted that school libraries support students to:

- “develop a love of reading for learning and for pleasure;
- acquire an understanding of the richness and diversity of literary and informational texts produced in Canada and around the world;
- obtain access to programs, resources, and integrated technologies that support all curriculum areas; and
- understand and value the role of public library systems as a resource for lifelong learning.”

What are the weaknesses/challenges of the Language, Grades 1 – 8 Curriculum and the English, Grades 9 – 12 curricula? Please provide a rationale:

Weakness and challenges identified in the review of the Language, Grades 1 – 8 Curriculum and the English, Grades 9 – 12 curricula include:

- The partnership between classroom teachers and teacher librarians is a symbiotic one that creates reflexive reactions that build upon each other and create an optimal environment for students seeking to build new “ways of knowing”. This critical connection should be mentioned much more frequently throughout the curricula.
- A narrow conception of “literacy,” with an over-emphasis on written communications and underemphasis on other modalities.
- The Media Literacy strand needs to be more robust and should be updated to reflect contemporary context.

In which areas could the existing curricula be improved and why? Please provide a rationale for your suggestions.

Embedding the school library professionals role into the curriculum document:

While we recognize the efficiency for posting the school library as front matter for the curriculum documents, we strongly recommend amending to:

- weave key components of the school library professional's role and library/learning commons examples into all curriculum documents to encourage a more collaborative, cross-school approach.
- specifically identify the professional practice of Teacher Librarians in equity and inclusivity in the curriculum to offer teachers clear pathways for support and partnership in this important area.

A Holistic Approach, with an emphasis on teaching multimodals:

The English curriculum is skills based, which allows for long-term development of reading comprehension, reading fluency, writing skills, listening and speaking skills, as well as media literacy. The skills require iteration over time in order to develop long-term critical thinkers and communicators.

In developing the new curriculum, we recommend:

- Emphasize multi-literacies and multimodal communication methods including aural, visual, linguistic, spacial, and gestural literacies (<https://newlearningonline.com/multiliteracies>).
- Rather than teaching by unit (poetry, novels, etc.), provide a structure that is more integrated based on core competencies (e.g. spiraling as is done in math curriculum).
- Ensure that instructional approaches draw from a wide range of research examining effective strategies for comprehensive literacy development.

An Open Skills Continuum:

Curriculum should recognize developmental milestones/benchmarks or an open skills continuum with language to describe the current competence and next steps for growth to support ongoing learning for each level.

We also recommend that the Ministry remove qualifiers from the achievements charts or clarify that qualifiers are not to be used for reporting as per "Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario's Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12."

Digital, Information and Media Literacy:

Given the proliferation of misinformation, we recommend more explicit expectations around the acquisition, evaluation, creation and dissemination of content and the school library professional's role in supporting teachers and students.

Considerations:

- Media literacy curriculum should emphasize more broadly digital and information literacy and the complexity of sources today.
- The separation of media from reading/writing leads to graphocentrism.
- The curriculum refers to "a variety of media texts" which disrupts the skills continuum.
- The expectations continue to include an emphasis on interpreting, identifying, and explaining through oral and written modalities. Incorporating more of the current technologies and media that students use today to express understanding and make meaning throughout the major strands would reflect the world our students live in.
- Teacher Librarians are expert information gatherers and can highlight the importance of intertextuality in deepening the competencies students acquire through interacting with a variety of texts and the classroom instruction.
- Update curriculum to address the very real media environment in which our students exist. Currently there is no expectation that we teach students how to recognize misinformation or understand social media in any way. The sophistication and ubiquity of social media in student's lives make addressing these sites and the platform/delivery technologies essential to updating the English curricula. These sharing/communication technologies are frequently part of the Teacher Librarian's instruction offerings to help raise students' critical thinking skills around social media and information technology.

Are there opportunities for students to deepen their understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, perspectives and ways of knowing through these curricula? Please provide suggestions and rationale.

School libraries and school library professionals support an expansive view and intentionality in collecting resources to support Indigenous education and can support language/English curriculum teachers.

The selection of appropriate materials is a part of the professional practice of school library professionals. This includes modeling collection development practices that follow established procedures, and processes, align with the role of the school library and respond to the library community. Library professionals provide guidance to

educators for the use and selection of authentic resources. As the International Literacy Association notes: “In their thoughtful work of collection development, school librarians select age-appropriate, diverse texts as they navigate district-based policies and school board scrutiny.”

Examples of considerations include:

- Awareness and cultural sensitivity about the terminology and use of different types of storytelling as it pertains to Indigenous cultures.
- Inclusion of Indigenous pedagogy.
- Avoidance of a pan-Indigenous approach.
- Expanding the curriculum section on identifying and decreasing negative stereotypes to elevate the necessary critical analysis skills of students that engage with these important issues.
- Ensuring that students experience texts that expose personal biases, identify systemic discrimination, and demonstrate the necessity for inclusivity and equity.

Is the language and content, including both expectations and examples/teacher prompts, used within the curricula inclusive in nature? Does it allow all students to see themselves reflected in the curricula? Please provide suggestions and rationale.

Recommendations:

- A de-colonized approach to course structure: Provide an exemplar of an uncolonized approach to course structure. Rather than teach by genre units, provide a long range model that demonstrates how one could meet the expectations through centering the big ideas through inquiry. Model using mentor texts and multiple modes of text.
- Expectations around inclusive curricula need to be more specific and direct. The emphasis on “anti-discrimination” must be reflected more deeply in the expectations or exemplars.
- Equity informed selection of materials: School library professionals are advocates of literacy equity and ensure the library collections include culturally relevant and responsive resources. Teaching and materials selection must move away from the European Canon, the reinforcement of gender binary, and written text as a format over other types of media. An emphasis should be placed on culturally responsive pedagogy and texts that centre diverse identities and lived experiences (Gholdy Muhammad). School libraries staffed by professionals can ensure that students have access to a truly diverse and amazing collection. This

means that our learners will see themselves in what they read, and find pathways to understanding the experiences of others.

What are some of the established or new evidence-based pedagogical approaches that could be considered to inform the review of the Language, Grades 1 – 8 Curriculum/English, Grades 9 – 12 curricula?

The ultimate goal of the library learning commons is to support curriculum and learning through instruction on essential literacy, research, inquiry and communication skills. (Leading Learning). Students are best served by curricula and instruction that makes them active architects of their learning experiences. Students should be able to progress through learning goals in authentic and improvisational ways, encouraged by the teacher and with tools to individualize their learnings and inhabit the curriculum (Catherine McLoughlin and Mark Lee).

Evidence shows that the school library program has a positive impact on key components of the languages curricula, including:

- Overall student achievement: Thirty years of international research has established that the active presence and participation of qualified library staff make a positive and significant difference in student academic achievement. (Lance & Kachel, 2018, p. 15).
<https://kappanonline.org/lance-kachel-school-librarians-matter-years-research/>
- EQAO score: Schools with trained library staff are more likely to have a higher proportion of grade 6 students who attained level 3* or higher on reading tests. Schools without trained library staff tend to have lower achievement on the grades 3 and 6 reading tests (both in terms of average achievement and attaining level 3 or higher. (School Libraries and Student Achievement in Ontario, 2006)
<https://accessola.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2006-SchoolLibrariesStudentAchievementOntario.pdf>
- Literacy and love of reading: A strong library program also has a positive impact on student literacy and by supporting a love of reading among students. Grade 3 and 6 students in schools with teacher-librarians are more likely to report that they enjoy reading (School Libraries and Student Achievement in Ontario, 2006). The Ontario Human Rights Commission 2022 Right to Read inquiry report highlights how learning to read is not a privilege but a basic and essential human right. Encouraging reading for enjoyment is key to achieving literacy. Per People for Education’s “Reading for Joy” report “...students with a more positive attitude toward reading tend to be more successful in all subjects... “engaged” readers

are also more likely to be socially and civically engaged.”(Reading for Joy, 2011). Research further shows that Multi Language Learners' vocabulary development is benefited by reading novels.

<https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/right-to-read-inquiry-report>

<https://accessola.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2011-Reading-for-Joy.pdf>

- Post-secondary readiness: Recent research by the Ontario Library Association: The Ontario School Library Impact Project (OSLIP) report highlights that many first-year university students who did not have access to school libraries in their high school lack the information literacy skills needed to meet the demands of college and university course assignments. (Ontario School Library Impact Project Report, 2020).

<https://accessola.com/ontario-school-library-impact-project/>

Suggested pedagogical approaches:

- Criticality: “Criticality is helping students to read, write and think in active ways... as opposed to passive—when you ask a question and there’s one correct answer, and you just take it in. We don’t want them to be passive consumers of knowledge. We want them to question what they hear on the news.” (Gholdy Muhammad).
- Inquiry Mindset: “The process where students are involved in their learning, create essential questions, investigate widely, and then build new understandings, meanings, and knowledge.” (Trevor Mackenzie)
- New Pedagogies for Deep Learning (NPDL): Michael Fullan’s New Pedagogies for Deep Learning (NPDL) as an exceptional resource that can guide curriculum approaches for school boards.
- Teaching Literacy: Include current experts on pedagogical approaches to teaching literacy, for example, Kylene Beers and Bob Probst, Penny Kittle and Kelly Gallagher, and Angela Stockman.

How could your community/organization/agency support students’ learning experience as it relates to the Language/English curricula?

TALCO and OSLA are recognized subject associations and continually seek ways to support student learning. Part of our role is identifying and curating resources that can enhance student learning, and student engagement with reading.

For example, for the past 25 years, Ontario’s students have participated in the Ontario Library Association (OSLA is a division of OLA) Forest of Reading Program, a recreational reading program designed to engage students in a love of reading. This

program, annually curated by library professionals, features 10 books (published within the recent two year period) in each of the various reading categories combined with programming designed by school library professionals. The program features author and illustrator visits January - May (virtual).

More than 15,000 students attend the festival component of the program held annually across the province in the spring (excluding pandemic timelines). At these events, students participate in voting for their favourite books, attend author and illustrator workshops and activities, and have access to free books.

OSLA and OLA uphold the rights of children and teens in accessing library services, including equitable access to library materials.

<https://accessola.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/1998-OLACChildrensRightsLibrary.pdf>

How could your community/organization/agency support educators' capacity to teach these curricula?

TALCO and OSLA are recognized school library subject associations (Ontario Teachers Federation) and actively share professional practice, develop resources in support of curriculum, provide professional development opportunities for educators and conduct research on school library impact and best practices.

TALCO and OSLA support professional practice of school library professionals, including recognition that Teacher Librarians have foundational approaches to research and learning through:

- Instruction of students in analyzing sources and academic ethics.
- Promotion, collaboration and incorporating technologies to enhance the understanding, representation and communication of knowledge.
- Support for teachers and students in English classes with a holistic perspective applied to the presentation of content and the modes that students can employ to demonstrate their unique understandings and transfer of knowledge.
- Acting as school leaders in new strategies for classroom instruction, assessment and metacognitive approaches which honour the student as an active agent in their own education.

TALCO and OSLA developed the following resources to support the curriculum:

- Library Selection Policy Development: TALCO and OSLA support school boards on the development of selection development policies and OSLA makes

available a sample selection policy for local adaptation. We recommend that changes to any curriculum documents references that the school library professional co-creates, implements, and advises on updates to school board policy related to library materials including selection, de-selection, weeding and intellectual freedom.

- Publishing curriculum resources: OSLA and TALCO produced the Inquiry Poster which features the role of the teacher-librarian in supporting the student and classroom educator in the curriculum-based student inquiry process.
<https://accessola.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2009-INQUIRYPOSTER-English.pdf>. Other resources include Together for Learning, a vision for a whole school approach to the learning commons, and input into the Canadian School Libraries (CSL) Leading Learning, a model for the development and implementation of the school library as a learning commons.
- TALCO undertakes collaborative negotiation of e-resource purchases, in the form of databases and ebooks, to support the K to 12 education sector in Ontario.
- The TALCO Digital Citizenship Project: an idea bank for teachers to help students establish themselves as knowledgeable and skillful digital citizens, and to use technology for learning in a thoughtful and ethical way.
- Continuing Education:
 - OTF Summer Institutes: OSLA and TALCO members offer educational programming in support of the English/Languages curriculum. A recent example from the 2021 Institute is: 'Develop Inspiring Art-Making, Skills and Love for Reading in Your Students'.
 - The Ontario Library Super Conference is Canada's largest conference for school library professionals and educators. Principals, Superintendents and Directors of Education are provided with complimentary registration upon demand. In addition, the Super Conference periodically hosts Treasure Mountain Canada, a research symposium on the learning commons.
- Research: OLA and OSLA partner with academic and aligned organizations to conduct regular research regarding school library best practices and impact, including Ontario School Library Impact Project (April 2021); School Library Response to COVID-19 Survey (April 2020); Exemplary School Libraries in Ontario (2006); and School Libraries and Student Achievement in Ontario (2006)
<https://accessola.com/school-library-research/>

Do you have suggestions on how the ministry could better support schools and educators to provide all students with an inclusive and equitable Language/English curricula?

The Ministry of Education recognizes the vital importance of staffed school libraries to student success, and provides all boards with funding for school library staff through the Grants for Student Needs (GSN). The GSN defines all school board funding, including dedicated funding for school library staff through both through the Pupil Foundation Grant and the School Foundation Grant. While the 2021-22 GSN introduced accountability measures to ensure that school boards are spending funding for school libraries on the school library, this funding is not enveloped. This means that school boards are not required to spend the funds as intended by the ministry formula, resulting in hundreds of thousands of Ontario students losing access to school libraries and school library staff over the past two decades, along with the critical resources they provide.

We strongly recommend that the ministry require that provincial funds currently allocated for school libraries, teacher-librarians and school library professionals are used for this intended purpose.

Appendix: Ministry of Education Instructions

The Ministry of Education is reaching out to education stakeholders, organizations, businesses, and partners to gain perspectives and gather information to inform future revisions to the **Language, Grades 1-8; English, Grades 9-12; Français Grades 1-8 and Français 9-12 curricula**.

Your opinions, views, and thoughts shared will be used as a whole and will not be attributed to any individual, association, federation or group.

Please see links below for the above-mentioned curriculum documents:

- The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: Language, 2006
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/language18currb.pdf>
- The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 and 10: English, 2007
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/english910currb.pdf>
- The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11 and 12: English, 2007
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/english1112currb.pdf>
- Le curriculum de l'Ontario de la 1re à la 8e année, Français, 2007
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/fre/curriculum/elementary/language18currb.pdf>
- Le curriculum de l'Ontario, 9e et 10e année, Français, 2007
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/fre/curriculum/secondary/francais910currb.pdf>
- Le curriculum de l'Ontario, 11e et 12e année, Français, 2007
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/fre/curriculum/secondary/francais1112currb.pdf>

***Note: At this time, the ministry is not seeking input on the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC), 2003.**

We are inviting you to review the current curriculum documents and provide responses in this online form. The ministry may schedule a follow-up conversation by phone or video conference to invite organizations to expand on responses and/or to ask additional questions based on your feedback.

We would appreciate if you could respond to the questions by **April 30, 2022 at 5:00 p.m.** Please indicate on the form if you are completing the questions as an individual or on behalf of your organization. Any questions may be directed to Samra Dervic, Senior Policy Advisor,

by email at samra.dervic@ontario.ca.

If you do not have the capacity within your organization to complete the survey, please consider reaching out through your network to identify and select one representative to participate. **Please note that the survey must be completed in one session. You will not have the opportunity to save and revisit your session. If you are responding on behalf of an organization, please collect all individual responses prior to completing the survey.**

We thank you in advance for considering this request and supporting the Ministry of Education's curriculum revision process. We look forward to your response.