

Enrichment Program Report
Parkdale Elementary School
2022-2023

One specific aim of the Gifted and Exceptional Learners' mandate for the 2022-2023 academic year was *Matching Instruction with Needs* through design and implementation of Enrichment initiatives and Acceleration Strategies (i.e., compacting curriculum) for individual bright and talented students at EMSB schools.

At Parkdale Elementary School, we implemented an engaging independent enrichment project centered around creative writing, designed to captivate our student's interests.

Independent Study
Ranjith Karuvalthambi, Grade 4

Creative Story Writing (February 2023 - June 2023)

Dr. Birlean designed this individual enrichment program to tailor specifically to the areas of strengths, interests, and needs of Ranjith based on the results of individual strengths assessment. Dr. Birlean conducted a comprehensive report outlining the tier 1 (classroom differentiation) and tier 2 (enrichment program differentiation) interventions for Ranjith.

Dr. Birlean led case conferences with the student's parents and the school team including the school principal, classroom teacher, resource teacher, school psychologist and special education consultant. Ranjith was presented with three options for the enrichment program from which he selected to engage in creative writing on a topic of interest, namely--Ancient Egypt. Throughout the 2022/2023 school year, Ranjith benefited from a weekly formal alternative program mentored by Ms. Pamela Anang, an academic success tutor in the Gifted and Exceptional Learner team.

This independent project revolves around storytelling to engage the student's interests and equip them with research and creative story-writing skills. At the beginning of this project, Ranjith was given resources about his interest, Ancient Egypt, to inspire the plot of his story and encourage learning. This initial stage focused on research and finding inspiration, where we explored a story's essential components, bringing Ranjith up to speed on the key features needed to flesh out his story. Through videos on creative writing, Ranjith familiarized himself with the setting, plot, theme, characters, and conflict elements that make a story compelling.

During his personalized writing process, Ranjith was offered writing prompts designed to expand his creative thinking in imaginative writing using visual stimuli. After brainstorming the general story pattern, we began character profiling, assigning each character a name and personality. Subsequently, we crafted the setting and plot, placing the characters we developed into the story's context. Based on the preliminary resources, Ranjith was given time to flesh out the story. Once this was complete, we began bringing each story component to life in the Book Creator

Application and Canva, useful tools in writing and graphic design. So far, we have completed the initial pages of the comic book titled, 'The Mystery of The Missing Tomb'. This story focuses on the search for the missing tomb of King Tut, rumored to contain a mystical treasure that could cause great harm if it falls into the wrong hands. At the end of this program, Ranjith was offered the opportunity to present his project to his classroom peers on June 8, 2023, and subsequently to his family at an in-school showcase on June 14, 2023.

Through active participation in this independent enrichment program, Ranjith has honed **key skills** in the following specific areas:

- Creative thinking and writing
- Storytelling
- Graphic design
- Digital literacy
- Research skills
- Presentation

Ranjith is well aware of his skill sets, yet he is overly dependent on memorization rather than analyzing personal experience. This makes it easier for him to apply systematic or structured principles but adversely affects his confidence and thinking in more creative settings. We recommend implementing the following strategies to nurture critical and independent thinking for the coming year. Introducing alternative learning techniques like mind mapping and active journaling would help Ranjith break through rote memorization. Mind mapping fosters a creative way of gaining a deeper understanding, and journaling encourages reflective thinking. To further develop originality and independence, creating an environment that stimulates his intellectual curiosity is crucial. Collaborating with highly motivated peers of diverse perspectives would expose Ranjith to new ideas and challenge his thinking helping him develop an independent voice. A good activity for this would be a creative problem-solving program encouraging him to think beyond established patterns.

In various communication with Ranjith's parents, Dr. Birlean recommended that Ranjith be transferred to a French Immersion school (local French Immersion, Gardenvue Elementary) where the pace and complexity of instruction will likely meet his cognitive needs more appropriately and where there are opportunities for engagement in various schoolwide enrichment programs. As of Fall 2023, Ranjith will attend Gardenvue Elementary School.

Report Completed by Dr. Birlean

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