

IDEA FILE



When planning and buying for the library in our new school, which opened in September 2006, I thought I'd try a chessboard and see how it went. I thought it would be useful for honing thinking skills—something we should encourage! Winsome Solomon, who is at Brampton Centennial, told me that she had a games area and it seemed like a good idea.

Well, there was such a demand I'm now up to three chessboards. Students are waiting outside the library when I arrive in the morning and the place is packed at lunch. I've tried a few jigsaw puzzles but with limited success. I now have a great game called Othello as well. It's easier than chess but requires strategic thinking. Today was the debut and it looked pretty popular.

And by the way, all those people crowding the chessboards—they're all male! Perhaps it's a cultural thing... our population is 90% Muslim, mainly from Pakistan and the Middle East—the birthplace of chess. Whatever is happening, it's a lively spot—and I try to make sure that there are books and magazines displayed nearby.

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This game thrilled our grade 8 Students!

Each year our future high school students visit Pine Ridge Secondary School in grade 8 for an orientation. They visit different areas of the school with a focus on fun, interactive activities. In the library, students are divided into teams and take

part in *The Amazing Race!* Students are familiar with this game from TV and get right into it. I play the theme

music and I have different envelopes marked in the three colours similar to the show. The clue envelopes are set up in different areas of the library, so that as the teams race to find their next clue and task, they are also finding different areas in the library such as the daily newspaper's locale, the magazine display, the reference area, the Teen Fiction Book Nook, etc.

I also build in a "Road Block" (just like the TV show), which is a task only one member of the group can carry out. My "Road Block" calls for this student to use the on-line catalogue in order to locate a specific book. Then they must race to the right location or shelf and take the "Found It!" tag, which is attached to the book. I make these "Found It!" tags in different colours for different resources in different areas of the library. That way, the students retrieve the tag, rather than take the book, which others will be searching for.

