

How Do we open the Lines of Communication?

Joetta Stoner, MLS
Former Elem. School Librarian
Teen Services/YA Librarian

How did we get on this topic

- ◆ Listserve. Are you on one?
 - I use YALSA yalsa-bk-request@ala.org
- ◆ Personal experience
 - Ever wish you knew what the library was doing for Summer Reading so you could promote it?

Conversation

JONESBORO, Ga. --- For years Lorrie McNeill loved teaching "To Kill a Mockingbird," the Harper Lee classic that many Americans regard as a literary rite of passage.

But last fall, for the first time in 15 years, Ms. McNeill, 42, did not assign "Mockingbird" --- or any novel. Instead she turned over all the decisions about which books to read to the students in her seventh- and eighth-grade English classes at Jonesboro Middle School in this south Atlanta suburb.

Among their choices: James Patterson's adrenaline-fueled "Maximum Ride" books, plenty of young-adult chick-lit novels and even the "Captain Underpants" series of comic-book-style novels. But then there were students like Jennae Arnold, a soft-spoken eighth grader who picked challenging titles like "A Lesson Before Dying" by Ernest J. Gaines and "The Bluest Eye" by Toni Morrison of which she wrote, partly in text-message speak: "I would have N3V3R thought of or about something like that on my own.

From article in the New York Times Sunday August 3, 2009

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/30/books/30reading.html?_r=1&hp

Which led to...

I just read this article. I love the way the media reports on things like this as if it's some revolutionary new idea. Self-selected reading is an approach that has been around for decades. It is great, though, to see it be front-page national news.

I was troubled to see that this teacher spent \$1,000 on books for her classroom. It makes me wonder if her school has a library and librarian running it. If so, I wonder what sort of shape it is in. The teacher apparently does not have her students make use of it.

Edward T. Sullivan, Rogue Librarian

When I taught because of budget limitations, I, and many teachers I taught alongside, spent easily that much in a year and probably more.

I did to get books for my students. The library will not lend books to anyone that owes fees and many of my students did, or the books were checked out, or the two week time period wasn't enough for most of them to work their way through the book and do the work assigned.

Yes, you can recheck once, but that's why the student could never get their hands on a book in the first place. And I was in a pretty well funded school district. It's not "right" but it's necessary. At least IMHO. But if you are living paycheck to paycheck and trying to feed your own children--you can't do it. There you go.

Gail Giles





**THE
ESSENTIAL
QUESTION
FOR TODAY ...**

This is a great discussion and brings to mind something that we deal with a lot in our public library (in an area that is mostly middle class) that I would really like to hear your thoughts on. The schools keep assigning books to a whole class at one time without providing copies for them. Naturally (and happily), the students come to us.

Well, happily up to a point. We're small, always cramped for space, and don't have a huge budget, so we can't stock 10 or even 5 books of everything the teachers decide out of the blue (not criticizing the choices--they're mostly pretty good--but the fact that they never warn us ahead of time) to require, so there are lots of upset students or parents who humpfh and say "Well, it looks like I'm gonna have to buy that book!" in a really wondering and annoyed kind of way, as if buying a book were unthinkable (wait till those kids are in college!), not as if they can't afford it. Often, the lucky people who get to our copies first did not previously have library cards, and we never see them again, not even to return the book (do you have a good return rate on required reading copies? And don't even talk to me about GED study guides!).

Cassie Wilson

Then ideas start...

Every year I send a letter to the principals of the 2 middle and 2 high schools close to my branch requesting that they tell their teachers to contact me about any class-wide assignments to ensure that we'll have enough materials for them. And every year I get no response, but many assignment deluges. I just keep hoping.

Denise Stutzman

Or counter-ideas...

Instead of sending the letter to the principal, send it to the head of the language arts department at each of the schools or contact the school librarian and get him/her to send it to the teachers. As a teacher, I love to work with the local librarians but principals don't have the time nor inclination to facilitate teachers' needs. I learned this the hard way.

Renee Brown

All of which leads to the research question...

I totally agree with Renee. Contact with your counterpart at the school or public library is worth its weight in gold. Our school district librarians at several points invited the public children's and YA librarians to our library meetings, just to facilitate dialog and to walk a bit in each other's shoes.

There were commonalities regarding collections and curriculum such as you all are describing, as well as teachers who knew the deal, and those without a clue. Teachers don't always think it through, and as research people, we know that any assignment needs to be walked through before it is actually assigned. We want to set the kids up for success, not frustration. Somewhere along the line I heard the line "work with the living" and that helped me focus on the positives.

Carole DeRubeis

So,

WHERE DO
WE START?



1st step: Communication

Meet and Greet / Open House

How do we get teachers to attend?

Reading Collections

How do we get lists?

Major Projects

How do we fill the needs without spending the money?

2nd Step: Research...

What is the difference between information and research?

What tools do we have to teach and facilitate research?

SIRS online database of journals, newspapers, etc. (\$/yr)

Encyclopedia online: World Book (\$/yr)

<http://www.worldbookonline.com/student/home?gr=Welcome+Brogden+Primary+School>

Step 3: Accomplishing the goal of education

Together we can provide much more access to quality information sources.

Google has its place, as does Wikipedia, but until students can decide for themselves what is, and what is not, a verifiable strong source they need us to be advocates for their search abilities.

One thing we do here that is kind of an easy collaboration is providing school library cards for the different school libraries. This allows teachers and librarians from the schools to borrow books they need for class assignments without worrying about overdue fees (we don't charge the school overdue fees). We are on the school delivery route too...so we can also pull books for them with enough notice and send them in delivery. It works really well. But even if you are not on their delivery route...providing the card (which we keep onsite here for most libraries...one school library has their card and they sign it out to teachers who need it) is a great service! And it helps our circ stats, too :-)

Stephanie A. Squicciarini, M.L.S.
Teen/Young Adult Services Librarian
Fairport Public Library
Fairport, New York 14450

We have a totally fabulous relationship with our public library in Lexington, KY! Our school has its own library cards, allowing me the privilege to check out as many titles as I need for our bi-annual reading event, The Reading Extravaganza, that routinely includes over 600 students. The library staff pull all the books I need, check them out and have the waiting for me when I arrive. We also are given special due dates so that our kids can have these books for 5-6 weeks. The absolutely best part though, is the great support of all the staff when they participate as group leaders for our 80+ reading groups, discussing every type of literature with high school students! We would be hard pressed to continue at the present level without their support; I simply could not provide a copy of each title for every student participant, nor could I find better adult participants.

Lynda N. Short, MSLS
Library Media Specialist
Paul Laurence Dunbar High School.
Lexington, KY 40513

Textbooks?

We at Santa Fe Springs City Library have been holding a small collection of text books for a few years now, and it's a very popular service. We normally hold either school ID or library card for a student to use a book (only one book at a time). We normally get our books from the school itself. The hardest part is keeping the collection current. If we had the space, it would be great to have a several copies of each book, but that would be a gigantic commitment. Most high schools use far more textbooks than we realize! You may want to discuss with the school, your supervisor, and your teen advisory committee which titles are most needed after school. Most importantly, which books cannot be taken home: this last has driven our tiny but mighty collection. In any case, this can be a great way to get more teens in your library and create a strong networking bond between the library and the school.

Shannon Dailey
Santa Fe Springs City Library

WHERE DO
WE GO FROM
HERE?



SIBL Project

Wilson County Public Library & Fike High School Media Center
Presented by Young Adult Librarian Joetta Stoner

AT FIKE HIGH SCHOOL

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 2ND

7-8PM.

(SONGS INSPIRED BY LITERATURE)