

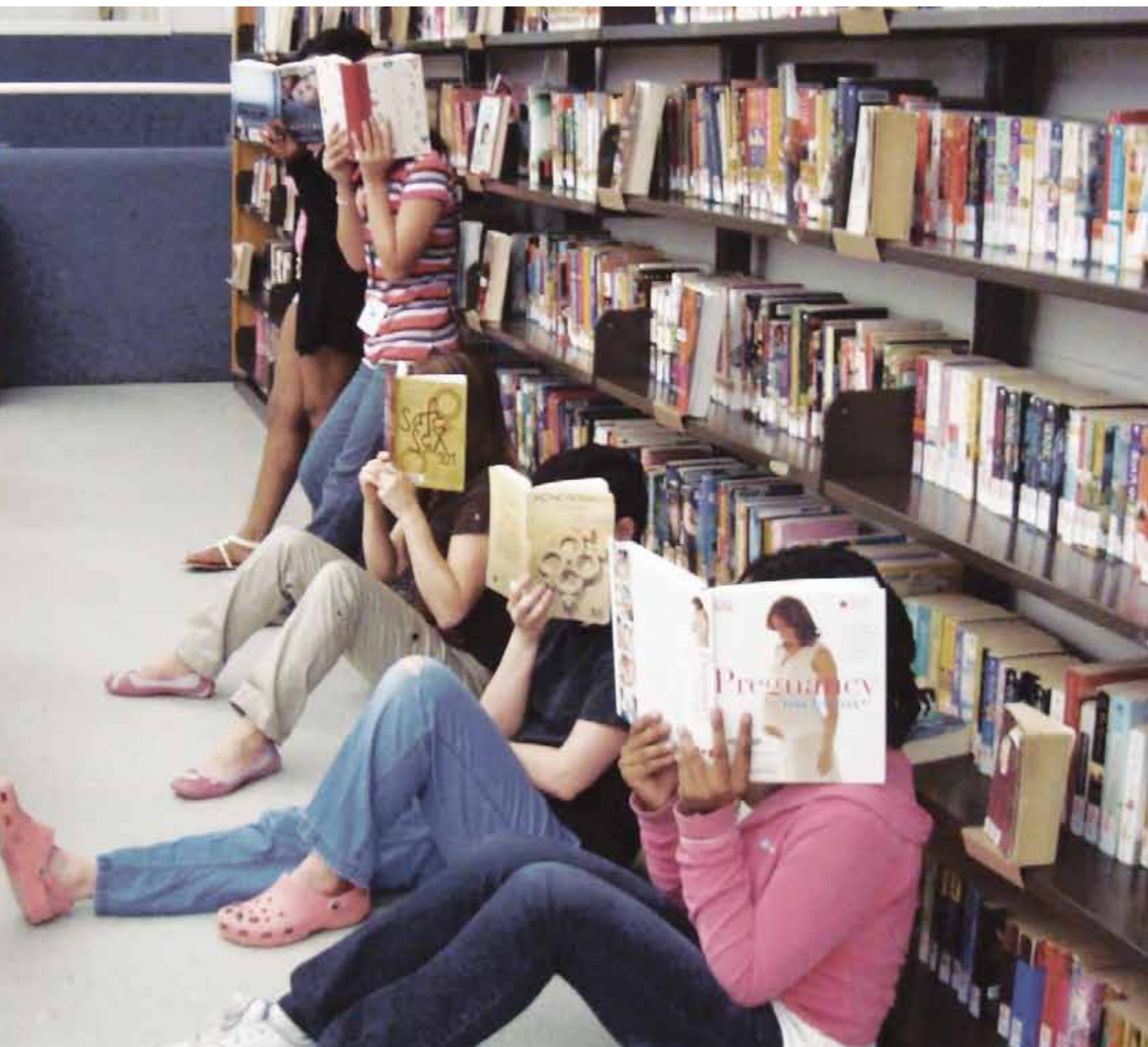
Fall 2011

Volume 19, Issue 1

# THE Teaching Librarian

The Magazine of the Ontario School Library Association

ISSN 1188679X



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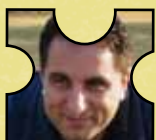


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Dr Alec Couros is an Associate Professor of educational technology and media at the Faculty of Education, University of Regina. He has given hundreds of workshops and presentations, nationally and internationally, on topics such as openness in education, networked learning, social media in education, digital citizenship, and critical media literacy.



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# THE Teaching Librarian

Volume 19, Issue 1

Fall 2011

ISSN 1188679X

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# sex @ your library

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## TingL mission

### The Teaching Librarian

*The Teaching Librarian* is the official magazine of the Ontario School Library Association. It is published three times a year to support OSLA members in providing significant and effective library programs and services. *The Teaching Librarian* promotes library programs and curriculum development that furthers exemplary educational objectives. The magazine fosters effective collaboration within the school library community and provides a forum to share experience and expertise.

## TingL references

*The Teaching Librarian* is a general magazine for OSLA members and not a scholarly journal. If your article does require citation of sources, please provide them within the text of your article or column with as much or as little bibliographic information as necessary for identification (e.g. book title, year). If you feel that the works you are citing require full identification, please provide a bibliography at the end of your piece, formatted according to the latest Chicago Manual of Style (15th edition) or APA Style.

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## TingL guidelines

V. 19, issue 2	"Multiple Literacies @ your library" Deadline: September 22, 2011
V. 19, issue 3	"Power @ your library" Deadline: January 21, 2012
V. 20, issue 1	"Smokin' @ your library" Deadline: May 10, 2012

Articles of 150–250 words, 500 words, or 800–1,300 words are welcome. Articles, when approved, should be accompanied by good quality illustrations and/or pictures whenever possible. Text must be sent electronically, preferably in a MS Word (or compatible) file. Pictures can be printed or digital (minimum size and quality are 4" x 6" and 300 dpi, approximately 700 mb and in jpeg format, if electronic). With photos which contain a recognized individual, please secure the individual's permission in writing for the use of the photo. Photos taken at public events, or crowd shots taken in a public place do not require permission from the subjects. All submissions are subject to editing for consistency, length, content, and style. Journalistic style is preferred. Articles must include the working title, name of author, and email address in the body of the text. OSLA reserves the right to use pictures in other OSLA publications unless permission is limited or denied at the time of publishing. Any questions about submissions should be directed to the Editor of *The Teaching Librarian*: TingLeditor@gmail.com.

## TingL subscriptions

*The Teaching Librarian* is a benefit of OSLA membership. Non-members may subscribe for \$36.00 per year, plus HST.

To become a member or subscriber, contact:

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FSC symbol here

### On the cover:

Whether you knew it or not, there's always been sex @ your library.

Photo by:  
Sarah Alinia Ziazi



# The Editor's Notebook



Diana Maliszewski

**F**requent readers of this column know that I often try to tie in the theme of the issue with anecdotes from my personal experience. I've mentioned my obsession with *Twilight* (on multiple occasions), my travels to different parts of the country, my parents' 50th anniversary, my blogs, my students' projects and requests, and my Teacher Performance Appraisal, among other subjects. Those voyeurs hoping to get a glimpse of some juicy dirt or titillating detail may be sorely disappointed by the lack of "baking details" in this article. ("Baking" is the euphemism my adult *Twilight* friends and I use when referring to intimate relations on the PG-13 website, *The Twilight Lexicon*).

I hope that the new look of our magazine will not disappoint our audience. Our OLA liaison and layout designer, Amanda Braun, has worked hard with our editorial board to create a modern looking, visually appealing print publication. Despite the declining success of print news, our magazine, *The Teaching Librarian*, is as popular and frequently read as ever. To add to the magazine's "sexy makeover", we've added a few new editors to our board. We had many applicants for this volunteer position and it was a very hard decision. We are pleased to welcome Evelynne Bernstein and Leslie Holwerda to the board.

Unfortunately, we are losing two of our most experienced editors. Brenda Dillon has contributed to the magazine since Volume 9, and Martha Martin has been around for just as long. Both women are great writers, conscientious editors, and amazing teacher-librarians. On behalf of the Ontario School Library Association, I wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

As I write this column, school libraries are "hot topics". The media has been abuzz with People for Education's annual report on the declining state of school library staffing in Ontario, in addition to the decision by the Windsor Essex Catholic District School Board to close all their elementary school libraries and distribute the books to classrooms.

Beyond Ontario, I've read through my Twitter feed that in California, only 24% of schools have credited media specialists. Lawyers are in the process of interrogating Los Angeles school media specialists to prove they can teach and keep their jobs, and the U.S. Department of Education has withdrawn federal support for school libraries.

There are good news stories as well: in countries such as Norway, Sweden, Portugal, Italy, and Finland, according to Canada's Dr. Dianne Oberg, there have been major national programs for improving school libraries, including financial support. Closer to home, the Ottawa Catholic District School Board has earmarked \$2,000,000 over three years to update its school libraries with digital tools.

School libraries are sizzling fodder for discussion. Let's hope the public interest doesn't fizzle. May this edition of the magazine be *Viagra* to the news! ■



First comes love, then comes marriage...  
Diana and her husband James on their  
wedding day, July 5, 1997.

## cy-brarian

[ˈsayh\ — brair-ee-uh n]

### Definition

A person whose job is to find, collect, and manage information that is available on the World Wide Web

*"Cybrarian - Definition and More from the Free Merriam-Webster Dictionary." Dictionary and Thesaurus - Merriam-Webster Online. Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, 2011. Web. 29 July 2011. <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cybrarian>>.*

### Origin

Blend of cyber- and librarian

First Known Use: 1992

*"Cybrarian - Definition and More from the Free Merriam-Webster Dictionary." Dictionary and Thesaurus - Merriam-Webster Online. Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, 2011. Web. 29 July 2011. <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cybrarian>>.*

### Examples

1. "The cy-brarian," stated Ms. Smith, "though an important member of the modern library, will never replace good old fashioned librarians. At least not until people stop loving books. So never."
2. The cy-brarian helped the students to find sources for their research papers using online journals and Google Books.
3. Cy-brarian's sure know how to party!

# President's Report

**T**he mission of the Ontario School Library Association (OSLA) is to further the development of school library programs, support teacher-librarianship and to strengthen and unify the voice of teacher-librarians as curriculum leaders in the province. The OSLA continues its work to protect school library programs that are currently jeopardized by funding cuts, many in danger of closure.

As the hub of most schools, the library is an integral part of a child's education. Teacher-librarians foster a love of reading and assist students in collaborative inquiry and the exploration, investigation and evaluation of new ideas. I am appealing to educators and especially people who work directly in school libraries to strongly advocate for their programs and for the continued existence of school libraries.



Some of the different activities and presentations at this year's Library Camp OTF.

## School Library Cuts

In May 2011, the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board announced that it was closing school libraries and distributing library books to classrooms. ([tinyurl.com/3f6c729](http://tinyurl.com/3f6c729)). This caused a public backlash, a media firestorm and a student led protest strike. Members of OSLA voiced their grave concerns on radio and television and were quoted in numerous newspapers including the Globe & Mail and Toronto Star.

The OSLA has contacted the Director of the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board and the Minister of Education to express shock and concern. Both letters can be read on the OSLA website.

The OSLA is also negotiating a meeting with the Ministry of Education to discuss the inequity of school library programs around the province and to protest grant cuts. Currently only about \$30 million of the promised \$80 million has been received by school libraries and the much-used online database, Knowledge Ontario, has had its \$ 2 million grant withdrawn.





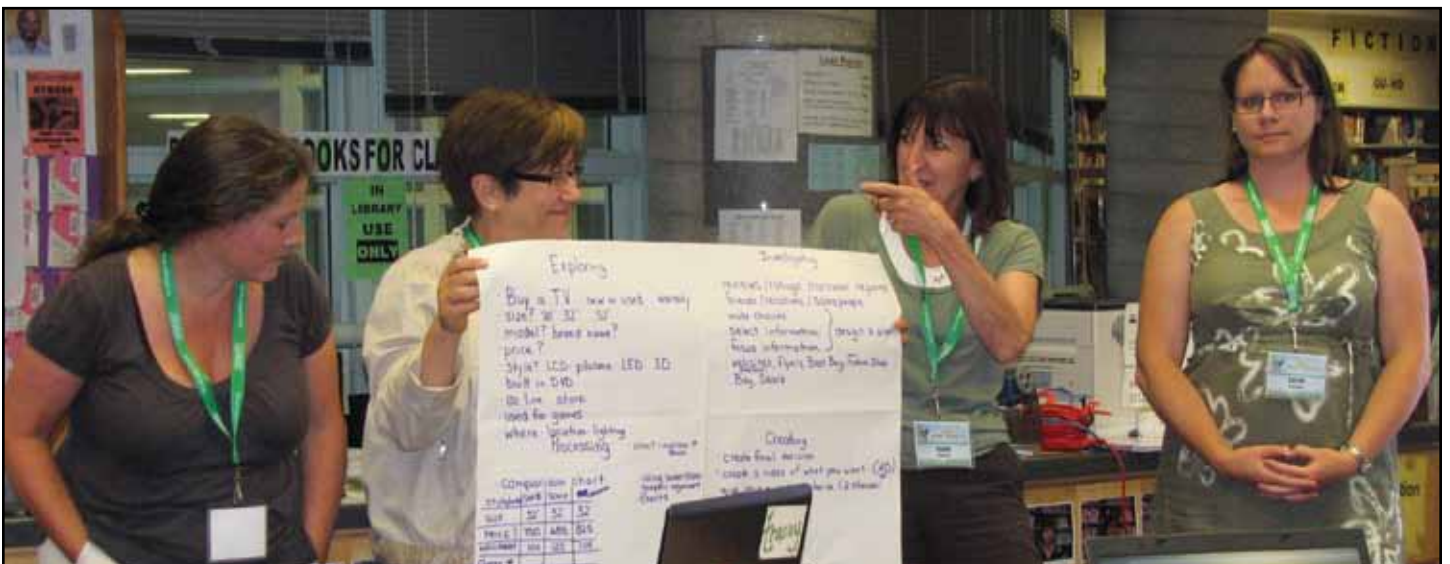


- 56% of elementary schools have a teacher-librarian, most are part-time; this is a decline from 80% in 1997/98.
- 66% of secondary schools have a teacher-librarian, just over half are full-time; this is a decline from 78% in 2000/01.
- 19% of elementary schools in Eastern Ontario and 10% of elementary schools in Northern Ontario have teacher-librarians, compared to 92% of elementary schools in the GTA.
- Some Northern and Eastern regions are without school libraries.
- There are huge discrepancies between school boards; some have well-staffed libraries, others have non-staffed libraries and a growing number have no libraries at all.

On July 6-8, many teachers attended a hands-on library professional development session at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). A registration fee of \$50 covered workshop materials, on-site meals and two nights of shared accommodation. With the *Together for Learning* document as the guide for this camp, highlights included:

- resources to support the Ministry's initiatives on financial literacy
- opportunities to create school library web pages, digital photo stories, virtual knowledge building centers, podcasts, and online tutorial videos
- introduction to cloud computing
- sessions on effectively using Twitter, QR codes and new apps
- information on character education, cyber bullying, on-line research skills and the creation of professional learning communities

**For more information: [tinyurl.com/oslasummer](https://tinyurl.com/oslasummer) |**



# Connected Library

## Afraid to Talk Sex? See Your Teacher-Librarian

It appears sex education continues to be a hot topic for Ontario educators. The Ontario Ministry of Education's withdrawal of the new Health and Physical Education Curriculum based on content related to human development and sexual health (gender identity, sexual orientation) suggests openly talking about sex in a school setting makes many Ontarians nervous. Many educators have been shaking their heads in disbelief at the Ministry's decision but, at the same time, secretly breathing a sigh of relief. Teachers have now implemented an interim edition, in which human development and sexual health was replaced with the growth and development portion from the 1998 document. News reports suggest the new and improved sex education curriculum is now in stalled mode. Meanwhile, students of all ages are struggling to make sense of all the conflicting sexual messages that bombard them on a daily basis. Now is the best time for teacher-librarians to talk sex. The links listed below offer accurate, inclusive and developmentally appropriate information about you know what...SEX.

## SEX EDUCATION RESOURCES FOR TEACHER-LIBRARIANS

### Sex in the Library

This blog cleverly promotes library mission statements and selection policies for school and public libraries by talking about books with sexual content for young teen readers. The annotated bibliography of fiction and nonfiction books is an amazing collection development resource for librarians. Not only will it give you a heads up about possible controversial topics and sexual content in prospective book purchases but it may also encourage you to review your own board and school collection development policies.

<http://tinyurl.com/5vqd7rs>

## SEX EDUCATION RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

### Communities and Schools Promoting Health

This is a collaborative Canadian health website which promotes school-based health and the comprehensive school health/health promoting schools movement. It offers

educators a variety of lesson plans and classroom-based learning activities in sexuality education. Lesson plans are organized by nine learning domains and divided by grade ranges. Links are also provided for research, reports, how-to manuals, planning and assessment tools. Check out the comprehensive list of Webquests on sexual health for grades 4 and up. These online activities offer creative ways to integrate research skills and media literacy into the health curriculum.

<http://tinyurl.com/6zkjefd>

### Ophea

The Ontario Physical and Health Education Association website offers a variety of interactive programs, physical education and health articles and a resource database for teacher(s). Two resources entitled "Always Changing" (Grades 4-6) and "Vibrant Faces" (Grades 7-8) can be ordered for free online. The junior program provides resources and teaching strategies to help students understand their changing bodies, the stages of puberty and the role of personal appearance in a positive self-image. The intermediate program promotes a healthy and active lifestyle. Both programs offer teacher and student guides as well as product samples and are directly linked to the Active Participation strand of the Ontario Health and Physical Education Curriculum.

<http://www.ophea.net/>

### Sex Education Resource Center

This Advocates for Youth website offers a variety of sex education resources to support the healthy sexual development of young people. Lesson plans cover a broad range of topics and grade levels. Topics include sexuality, body image, sexual health, sexual orientation and gender identity.

<http://tinyurl.com/5sqfumb>

### Teaching Sexual Health

This website was created by Alberta educators and health professionals with the goal of enhancing excellence in teaching sexual health. This easy to use site is organized into four main areas for educators: How to Teach, Lesson Plans, Teacher's Lounge and Resources. The added

bonus of being able to search lesson plans by instructional method offers ideas for differentiated instruction in the classroom. It should be noted the lesson plans correspond with the curriculum outcomes for Alberta Education's Program of Studies but they can be easily be adapted to the Ontario Health Curriculum.

<http://www.teachingsexualhealth.ca/teacher/howwhy.html>

### TWEEN SEXUALITY

#### It's My Life

This is a tween advice site hosted by PBS (Public Broadcasting Service). Helpful information and advice is given about Friends, Family, School, Body, Emotions and Money. Students can read articles, play games, take quizzes and polls, get advice from experts and contribute their own comments and questions. Puberty Games include IML Journal Page, List of Books, Cross word puzzle. Unfortunately, video clips are only available in the U.S. Check out the Wheel Houz tool which allows students to create a "word wheel" based on personal questions they have answered. The completed wheel represents who they are and can be used as a means for self reflection and group discussion.

<http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/>

#### Kids Health from Nemours

The Kids and Teens Health sections of this website both offer information about youths' growing body and mind. The teen's section highlights some challenging sexual and mind health issues around abusive relationships, date rape, love and romance and also falling in love.

<http://kidshealth.org/kid/>

### TEEN SEXUALITY

#### Amplify

This youth activist website offers a variety of collaborative tools (Blog, Social Networking Communities) for students to discuss issues around sexual health and reproductive justice. *Youth Resource* is also a website hosted by Advocates for Youth. It offers resources and support to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth, and to young people with

questions about sexual orientation.

<http://www.amplifyyourvoice.org>

#### Mind Your Mind

This website for youth gives access to information, resources and tools to support them in staying healthy. Issues covered include anxiety, depression, grief, suicide and sex. Check out the game "Adventures in Sexuality" under Tool Box. Players must help the Sex Squad stop the Sperminator and save Sex City by answering questions about sexually transmitted diseases.

<http://mindyourmind.ca/>

#### Sex, Etc.

The title says it all! This is a comprehensive website which offers facts and information about anatomy, safer sex, resisting sexual pressure, sexual orientation, as well as many other issues related to sexual health and relationships.

<http://www.sexetc.org/>

#### Sexuality and U

This website offers a straightforward and positive approach to sharing information about contraception, STI preventions, masturbation, genital piercing, sexual identity and orientation and many other topics.

There is a teacher resource page with a wide variety of lessons and PowerPoint presentations for classroom use.

<http://www.sexualityandu.ca/>

### E-BOOKS

#### For Sex Education, See Librarian: A Guide to Issues and Resources

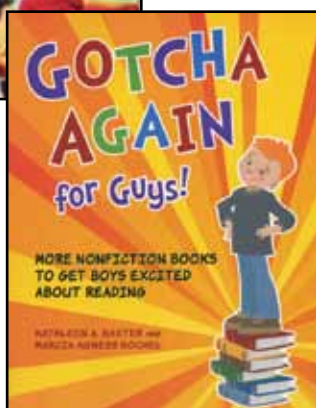
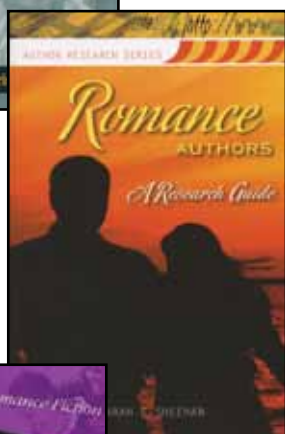
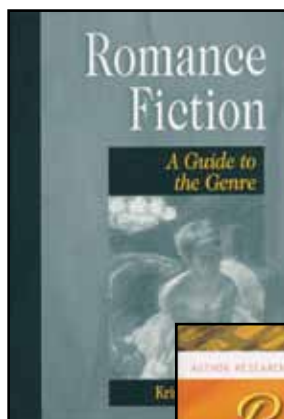
Martha Cornog and Timothy Perper  
1996  
0313290229

This practical guide to sex education resources in libraries offers an annotated bibliography of works published since 1985. This list of over 600 resources offers a variety of viewpoints, which cover a wide range of topics. Children's titles include a suggested grade level.

<http://tinyurl.com/6z4rn5m>



# Professional Resources



**R**omance is everything. Before you decide to swamp the OLA with letters about Romance Fiction's narrow audience focus, read on. A few of the books reviewed below will surely change your mind. Romance now deals with many themes of interest to both sexes, and does not follow the narrow stereotypical "boy meets girl; falls in love; lives happily ever after." Like, as if...

Just as young people have become more aware and sophisticated, so too has this genre, which now includes diverse categories or subgenres such as abortion, abuse, adoption, alternative reality, coming-of-age, date rape, ethnic and multicultural, 'inspirational,' pregnancy, psychological thrillers, sexual orientation, sexually-transmitted diseases or infections, and even the 'medical' romance. It may even be that a certain Toronto-based newspaper you read this morning is the owner of Harlequin Enterprises Ltd., founded in Winnipeg, 1949. Everything is romance. And not all endings are happy.

**Romance Fiction:**  
**A Guide to the Genre**  
**Kristin Ramsdell 1999 1-56308-335-3**  
**For Grades middle to high school**  
**Designed for teacher-librarians, teachers, readers, writers**

Ramsdell's *Romance Fiction*, a second edition follow-up to *Happily Ever After: A Guide to Reading Interests in Romance Fiction* (1987), served as the model for Carolyn Carpan's teen romance fiction guide above, and is also part of the *Genreflecting* Advisory Series (Diana Tixier Herald, Series Editor).

High school students who need a book or topic for an English ISU, English teachers or teacher-librarians who want ideas or suggestions will find this

resource invaluable, especially the chapters on Research Aids: History and Criticism, Author Biography and Bibliography, Periodicals and Review Sources, Societies and Organizations. Included are references to dissertations and theses, three of which are Canadian master's theses from the 1990's.

The book is divided into three basic parts: Introduction to Romance Fiction, The Literature, and Research Aids, with handy right-hand margin symbols directing the reader to individual chapters, for example, The Appeal of Romance Fiction; Advising the Reader; Sagas; Gay and Lesbian; Ethnic/Multicultural. The Author/Title and Subject Index help find specific books and themes quickly. With over 300 pages of suggestions, recommendations and advice, this book is a great addition to your reference or professional collection.

**Romance Authors:**  
**A Research Guide**  
**Sarah E. Sheehan**  
**2010 978-1-59884-386-6**  
**For Grades 7 to 12**

**Designed for readers, students, researchers, librarians, writers**  
"Romance is the Rodney Dangerfield of genres," says the author in her introduction. "We just don't get much respect, as either a reader or a writer." Shehan also disputes the cliché that these books are formulaic, blaming that idea on the category novel, the "...black sheep of the publishing world..." that "...sells HUGE"—all the same.

Unlike the other two guides reviewed below, this one focuses on just 50 authors—mainly from the 20th and 21st centuries (Jane Austen being a notable exception). Web sites are included

among the Research Resources, in addition to the criticisms, readers' guides, biographies, interviews, encyclopaedias and handbooks pertaining to each writer who is listed alphabetically.

Each entry identifies the author's genre, followed by a short biographical sketch, pseudonym (if appropriate), major works, plays, "other works," and even movies based on the novels.

Especially useful for students, teachers and teacher-librarians trying to find material about authors for independent study projects, this book will also be helpful for the popular Grade 10 English "novels to movies" assignment.

**Rocked by Romance:  
A Guide to Teen Romance Fiction**  
**Carolyn Carpan 2004 1-59158-022-6**  
**For Grades 6 to 12; books for boys and reluctant readers**  
**Designed for teacher-librarians, teachers, readers, writers**

Part of the *Genrelecting* Advisory Series (Diana Tixier Herald, Series Editor), *Rocked by Romance* briefly outlines the development of this genre and even credits Lucy Maud Montgomery with one of the first coming-of-age romance novels. Multiple references to Canada, Native Canadians and Canadian authors are made (Beth Goobie and Shelley Hrdlitschka, for example).

The beauty of this book is the advice to teachers on how to recommend 'romance' to teens: "...don't decide for your patrons if they are ready to read about sex. Teens have a right to read the books they enjoy, even if their parents don't want them reading about certain topics. Teens will censor themselves..."

Suggestions are made about selecting,

acquiring, cataloguing, displaying and weeding your collection.

Ten right-hand margin symbols guide readers through the book's ten chapters, including classic, contemporary, alternative reality, suspense and issues romance. Each chapter starts with a brief description of the category, moves on to describe its appeal to teens, and then provides tips on how to advise about the books. These are listed alphabetically under the author's last name, followed by the name of the book, a short synopsis, its publisher, ISBN and, where necessary, the square-bracketed comment: [Sexual Content, Reluctant Readers].

The separate Author/Title and Subject index will direct you quickly to over 200 pages of great teen and young adult reads. This reference is highly recommended to those who need a current resource guide to start or expand on their collection.

**Gotcha Again for Guys!  
More Nonfiction Books to Get  
Boys Excited About Reading**  
**Kathleen A. Baxter, Marcia Agness  
Kochel 2010 978-1-59884-376-7;**  
**available as an ebook**  
**For Grades Kindergarten to Grade 6,**  
**including ESL-ELL**  
**Designed for teachers, teacher-**  
**librarians**

These co-authors are quite blunt about the purpose of their reference guide and point to gender as a bias when teachers or teacher-librarians choose books: "Women need to get over the 'ick' factor. Let's face it, adult men do not often read the same books that adult women read... There's a big difference, and we need to acknowledge and respect that difference. Let us

make sure our classroom and library collections have plenty of guy appeal — and make sure that boys know that we have high-interest materials."

Not all of the books suggested have a "gross" or "ick" factor, however, and many of the titles are written by women. Its twelve chapters include Sports, Disasters and Mysteries, Science, Gross and Disgusting, Animals (of interest to girls, of course), Around the World (human history for both genders), and are divided into Booktalks, Author Profile and Worth Reading.

In the Booktalks section, books are listed according to the author's last name, followed by a brief summary with specific mention of the page number to refer to. This feature is very helpful for educators giving books talks, especially if your reading time is limited, but must cover a wide area of age and interests.

One author per chapter is chosen for the author's profile, which takes the format of a question-and-answer interview. At least 200 book titles are suggested in each chapter, a feature which makes selecting from these books much easier, with a handy, separate author and title index to 200+ pages of reference.

The authors of *Gotcha* place emphasis on contemporary, unusual titles and give recommendations on how to stimulate interest: do a PowerPoint of new book covers, which is welcomed by publishers, as long as it is used for in-house promotion. ■

To purchase these and other great titles, contact The OLASore\* at 416-363-3388 or visit us online at [www.accessola.com/store](http://www.accessola.com/store)

# Ask Rita Resourceful

## *Dear Rita Resourceful:*

I have a few books in my middle school library that mention teenagers having sex and their pages are well thumbed indeed. Recently I had a visit from an irate parent who demanded that I remove one such book from circulation because it contained a description of two teenagers having sex. I referred to my school board's document on dealing with controversial issues for guidance. The board's document provided some decent advice but afterwards I felt a little beaten down. What would you have done in my situation?

*Signed,  
Beleaguered*

## *Dear Beleaguered:*

You need a big hug for being part of an honourable group of people who have valiantly fought against censorship and have celebrated the freedom to read. The sad reality is that these efforts often take a personal toll. The good news is you aren't in danger of being burned at the stake. The main categories for challenges to books in school libraries involve sex, profanity,

religion, and racism. These are issues that some people can get emotional about and those emotions can fuel ugly words or actions. I find that a fine cup of tea and a good book about the freedom of expression often helps. I'm going to recommend Robert P. Doyle's 2010 resource guide, "Banned Books: Challenging Our Freedom to Read," published by the American Library Association.

You might also consider making the issue into a learning opportunity. Consider a display of books in your collection that are banned somewhere in the world. Seek out and promote works from authors, publishers or librarians now behind bars for their work.

## *Dear Rita Resourceful:*

I am a teacher librarian in an elementary school. I have a particularly persistent group of grade fives who take great delight in finding and sharing images of any naked bodies they find on the bookshelves. Should I take disciplinary action with these students?

*Signed,  
Exasperated*





### *Dear Exasperated:*

No punishment is necessary. Remember these students are seeking out and obtaining information and their efforts need support from a like-minded librarian. If you suspect that the student(s) involved may need to talk to a safe adult, suggest the school guidance counselor or board social worker as contacts—remember your role as a resource provider!

On the lighter side, try telling the group of students that are keenly seeking out pictures of nudes that you are delighted that they have such a keen interest in the human body and that you would like them to prepare a presentation on the topic for the principal or perhaps the school council. Follow through and enjoy the process of helping children learn about audience and purpose.

Alternatively, have the students mark all the favourite bits with sticky notes that explain the educational merits of each image. Request a parent-teacher conference. If neither of the two previous suggestions works, try endorsement. Put a bin on the floor and tell the grade fives to collect all the naked body books of interest.



Encourage the students to borrow books from the bin for reading at home but not during school instructional hours. Insist that they should read as many as they want.

### *Dear Rita Resourceful:*

There's a secluded part of the stacks in our secondary school library that is a favourite meeting spot for student couples. It suffices to say that the only research they're doing involves each other. On two separate occasions I have had to ask students to stop "making out" in the library. Any suggestions on how I might encourage more studious activity?

*Signed,  
Embarrassed*

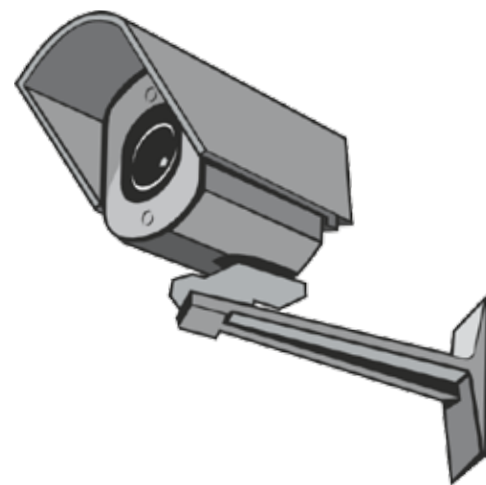
### *Dear Embarrassed:*

Curbing unwanted behaviours of any kind in a school library setting requires tenacity, resourcefulness, and a healthy sense of humour. Here's my advice:

1. Buy a fake video camera (\$30) and install it in the spot where students are gathering. Place a sign below it that reads: All activity in this area

will be videotaped and shown to your parents.

2. Decorate the area with a large picture of Prince Charles kissing Camilla Parker Bowles.
3. Think about establishing better lines of sight around the library and bone up on your best "disapproving-eye-look" before any heavy research gets started. ■



We welcome any questions you may have for Rita Resourceful. To protect Rita's identity, please email them to [tingleditor@gmail.com](mailto:tingleditor@gmail.com), with the subject Ask Rita, and we'll be sure to pass them along!

# RE-IMAGINING HAMLET THROUGH TWEETS

**L**ibrarians and teachers alike are wondering how to best use social media in their classrooms and whether this platform can enhance student learning. Educators from across the province are experimenting with Twitter and are engaged in a variety of projects that attempt to harness the educational potential of this application at the same time as define its merits.

*Danika Barker and an enthusiastic group of educators, amateur actors and students recently tried to enrich their studies of Hamlet through tweeting. The idea originated when members of the Royal Shakespeare Company performed Romeo and Juliet in modern day 140 character or less “tweets.” <http://suchtweetsorrow.com> Barker wondered if she could pull off something similar with Hamlet. What follows is a description of Barker’s experiment.*

Over the course of a weekend, I set up a website (<http://www.brevity.danikabarker.ca>) and put out the call for actors on Twitter. In no time at all I had a full cast interested.

I had no idea what to expect as the experiment progressed and I tried to let the project evolve as naturally as I could. With the exception of the occasional email, direct message, a Google calendar, and a blog (<http://danikabarker.ca/blog/>) to keep the project on track, I resisted directing as much as possible.

One of the magical things about the whole process was that the use of Twitter was its charm as a great equalizer. People of all ages, genders, and from all over the world took part. Claudius (@ClaudiusKing) was from England, one of our most active extras (@cool\_court\_chik) was from New Zealand, and key male characters like Horatio (@Horatio\_79) and

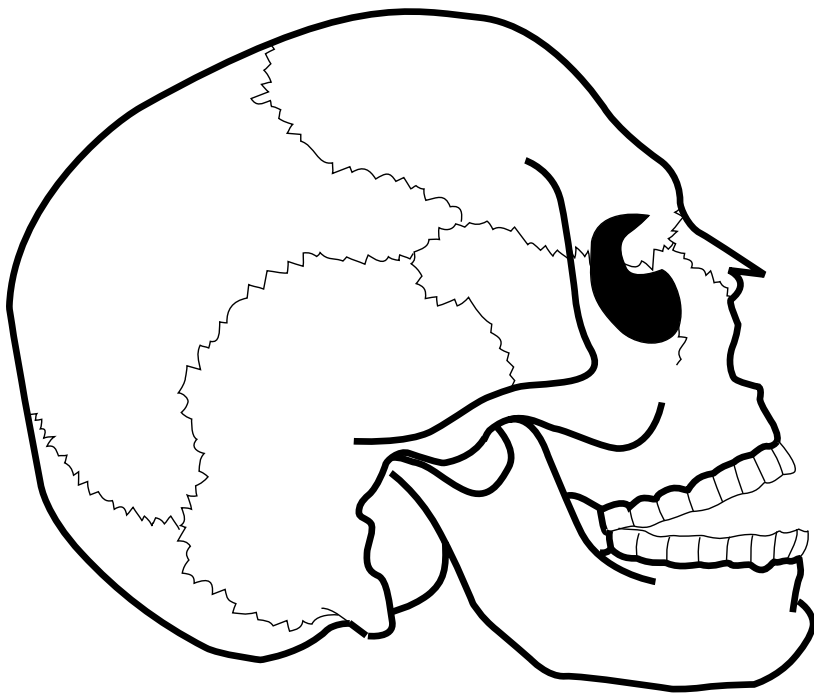
Polonius (@P0p0lonius) were played by women.

Conversations on Twitter did not rigidly follow Shakespeare’s script but instead actors discussed their characters’ lives between the scenes. This led to fascinating discussions about relationships. For one thing, the actors playing Hamlet (@Hamlet\_the\_Dane) and Horatio grappled with the nature of their friendship. They tweeted about why Horatio had come home for Hamlet’s father’s funeral, but didn’t see his best friend until the after the marriage between Gertrude (@Gertrude\_m) and Claudius. The actors conversed about whether or not Hamlet really ever loved Ophelia (@luvsick\_ophelia).

Some of the participants began incorporating multi-media components. They took pictures and videos and then provided links using Youtube and Twitpic. They did fanciful things like staging a “Hamlet-cam” and posting some paparazzi-style photos of Ophelia collecting weeds by a muddy riverbank.

Back in the classroom I shared highlights of the conversations between the various actors and offered discussion prompts for my students on our blog (<http://danikabarker.ca/blog/>). The improvisational nature of the project along with the free form interactions between the actors playing the characters meant that the students had a lot of material to analyze and questions to ask about the format, process, and how it all related to the study of Hamlet.

Here are some guidelines that I would like to pass along to any librarians and teachers who might like to conduct their



Danika Barker



**1** Set up the Twitter accounts for students so that you have access to all of the communication--not so much for policing but so you can see the planning that happens through direct messages. An email account is necessary to set up a Twitter account, but I've found a good workaround is to use variations on a gmail address such as yourname+student1@gmail.com.

**3** Consider having more than one person play a particular character. In our own experiment there were times when I played Hamlet, Horatio, and Guildenstern at the same time!

**2** Don't expect students to deliver a performance of the play, but instead have them participate in "between-the-lines" interaction at regular intervals throughout the text.

**4** Not all teenagers are Twitter-literate and even when they are, the thought of using technology for studying something like literature is not always the key that opens the door for engagement. Try guiding discussion by posing a question like, "What is the value in re-imagining a text using social media?" Encourage your students to reflect on the process and product and whether it enhanced their understanding of the play. ■



# Exploring Alternatives

- Quiet corners in the library.
- Hands working fast under the desks.
- Any single-seater easily modified for two.

**The tipping point: an open condom I need to remove from the lounge-area couch. Most of the time I'm not privy to their sexting, thankfully. It dawns on me: there could be a need in my library for more resources on sex for teens.**

I have queer and questioning teens looking for novels and texts that relate to them. I like to think of myself as a liberal-minded person, yet I struggle to search the catalogue for H-O-M-O-S-E-X-U-A-L-I-T-Y. I head over to 306 and pull out a few books. One book has a cover on it involving very healthy, clean-cut teens on a background of bright geometric shapes. (It may be relevant to mention at this point that the average age of my non-fiction section is 1989). I move to safe sex, 613. I locate abstinence, back in 306 and there are more titles here than anywhere else. What does that say about the readiness of my school community for “horizontal habits”? We don't even cover Kinsey in the curriculum until grade 12.

Sex has taken on a whole new life recently as we introduced a very successful young parents' program, helping teen parents finish their diplomas at our school. The unspoken truth about teen sexual behavior is pervasive at the high school. A few years ago, I remember having this awkward feeling about telling my classes that I was pregnant, because they would

suddenly know that I had had sex. It seemed to suddenly give my class permission to ask questions about sexual health and behaviour. A girl from an orthodox background spent an hour with me after school one day convinced that her parents were going to kill her because she had stretched too far in gym and bled. Clearly there is a need for current, sexual health resources that explore emotions, philosophies and attitudes.

I bought resources this year, because as awkward as I feel about addressing these questions, the alternative is scarier. The alternative is that my questioning teens will have unsafe sexual encounters that they are unprepared for. The alternative is that the young women in my school won't know the difference between a fetish and abuse. The alternative is that a happy monogamous couple won't know how to prevent consequences that they are not ready to live with.

The librarian's task is to find just the right combination of books about sexuality for everyone and it isn't easy. These are the best four books in my collection.





Alanna King

## Sex Sex and More Sex

BY SUE JOHANSON

ISBN: 0-670-85599-5

If there's another Canadian expert on sexual health, I don't know about it. Sue Johanson is the leading lady who puts condoms on bananas in front of entire schools to get her safe sex message across. This book is structured as an A to Z look at many things sexual. Each entry begins from a real question from a real person...not necessarily a teen. It's approach is frank, factual and inclusive.

## he's just not that into you: The No-Excuses Truth to Understanding Guys by Greg Behrendt and Liz Tuccillo

ISBN: 0-689-87474-X

This is the female favourite in my library. Greg is determined to get his message across that females need to detect and move on from unsatisfying relationships. Each chapter is structured like a workshop with a summary and a workbook page. The focus is not sex but how sex and relationships can send mixed messages. Liz tempers each contribution with her own uniquely female perspective. It is humorous and helpful.

Having said all that,  
I had that awful  
couch permanently  
removed. ■

## Sex A Book for Teens: An Uncensored Guide to Your Body, Sex and Safety by Nikol Hasler

ISBN 13: 978-0-9819733-2-6

ISBN 10: 0-9819733-2-9

This book is the male favourite in my library, and I often catch parties of teens sitting around giggling while reading this book. It is written by the host of the popular online comedy series The Midwest Teen Sex Show (<http://midwestteensexshow.com/>). My favourite chapter title is: "Masturbation: The Greatest Love of All." It is funny, frank and friendly. I think this is why they like it....the book, I mean.

## GLBTQ: The Survival Guide for Queer & Questioning Teens BY KELLY HUEGEL

ISBN: 1-5742-126-7

The structure of this book not only answers questions for people who identify as GLBTQ but also for parents, educators, friends and family. It covers everything from biological reasoning, myths, practicing safe sex, coming out, to finding support groups and supportive environments for life. It was a 2004 winner of the Benjamin Franklin Award in the Gay/Lesbian category, awarded for being the best book by an independent publisher, Free Spirit Publishing.



# Cross-Pollination @ your library

**A**s an avid gardener my fingernails are perpetually dirty from May to October. I love to get my hands in the soil — no gardening gloves for me! But as a teacher-librarian the time of year that I really get my hands dirty is in the dead of winter, during Super Conference. Super Conference is to my inner librarian what Canada Blooms is to my inner gardener. Different species of librarians gather together for one magnificent learning orgy. Ideas fly through the air like pollen on the wind. And as isolated as one might have felt back at school as the only teacher-librarian, you can't help but be stimulated by the tangible energy in the air. Super Conference is one giant greenhouse where ideas transfer from one library sector to another. Inspiration indeed!

Super Conference is the highlight of my professional year. My first couple of years I tended to stick with plants of my own species, attending sessions sponsored by OSLA on topics directly related to my own practice. But it didn't take long for my eye to stray to the temptations of other sectors.

I remember coming home from the conference many years ago intoxicated with the notion of being able to share ideas with colleagues in an exotically named platform called the wiki. Reference librarians at the University of Windsor had figured out how to work more efficiently by using this online collaboration tool for sharing the suggestions that they made to anxious undergrads. This was at least a year or two before I heard anyone in K-12 education even mentioning the word! The experience was energizing and in subsequent years in the weeks after the conference I'd find myself throwing around words and phrases like "RSS", picked up from OLITA, or "embedded librarianship", from the mysterious intellectuals in OCULA.

I like to think that I've become a bit of a master gardener when it comes to Super Conference, and as such, I humbly offer up some advice for optimizing this grand experience.

## Cross-Pollination:

1. The transfer of pollen from an anther of the flower of one plant to a stigma of the flower of another plant.
2. Influence or inspiration between or among diverse elements: "Jazz is fundamentally the cross-pollination of individual musicians playing together and against each other in small groups" (Ralph de Toledano).

American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language



## Anita Brooks Kirkland

### Tip 1: Stop playing the innocent and go to the party.

Let's face it, for teachers we're a pretty promiscuous bunch! Go to any other educators' conference and you will find teachers talking to teachers. Yes, there might be history teachers talking to geography teachers, or on rare occasions even high school teachers talking to elementary teachers, but on the whole it's a pretty tame scene. But at Super Conference teacher-librarians

Even as late as the eighteenth century it was difficult for Europe and America to accept that innocent little flowers were involved in anything as unpuritanical as sex.

(Hill, 1985)

mix with each other, yes, but also with public, university, college, health, and yes, even "special" librarians. To the uninitiated it can all seem a bit intimidating. Recognizing this, the good gardeners in the association hold an opening night mixer where experienced cross-pollinators in the form of the various associations' leaders do their best to help wallflowers blossom. Go to the party. Go to every party. If you're not much of a mixer, take a friend. Your professional learning network starts here and Super Conference offers a wonderful opportunity to connect with others in our field.

### Tip 2: Go to the all-conference plenary sessions.

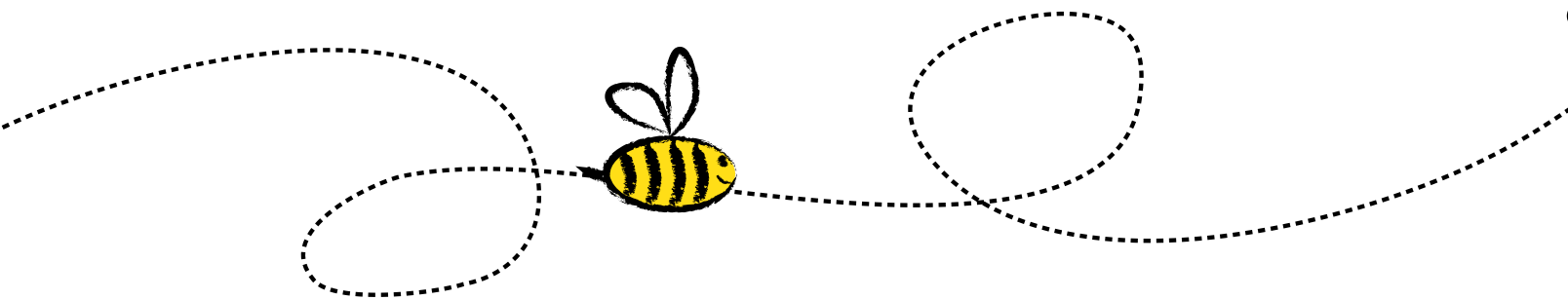
Plenary sessions provide a great way to flirt with big, new and potentially dangerous ideas, but at a safe distance and in the relative anonymity of a crowd. Take last year's conference. Over a span of three days we heard Stephen Abram, Michael Wesch, Anna Porter, Atom Egoyan, Diana Swain and Jian Ghomeshi. Years ago Stephen Lewis electrified the crowd and inspired the whole association to take action for Africa. A couple of years ago a most articulate Romeo Dallaire moved us with his horrifying tale of human brutality. We've learned from Ethan Zuckerman that technology is not necessarily neutral and access to technology is a human rights issue worthy of the attention of information professionals. Super Conference offers a window on the wider world and encourages us to be outward looking.

If the tension in the story of plants was the distance between lovers, pollen was what would bring them together, over feet or even across continents. It was an evolutionary trick that transformed the world by letting strangers have sex.

(Dunn, 2009).







### Tip 3: Go to at least one session sponsored by a different library sector.

Those other librarians are more like us than you might suspect. Same issues, different context. Transfer of ideas strengthens the gene pool.

I've already mentioned my wiki revelation. Wikis have now become part of my way of life. Ideas in libraries are more similar than different. The philosophy of the learning commons extends across library sectors, and has had a tremendous influence on university libraries in particular. Because we're closely related our ideas mix well and the result of this cross-pollination is richer knowledge and more effective practice.

A highlight of my annual conference experience is OLITA's Top Tech Trends session. Last year I also picked up some great ideas for running an innovation "boot camp" from university librarians

Contrary to the tales of some science fiction writers, however, plants must be closely related to cross-pollinate. The chances of crossing a kumquat with a zucchini are very remote, though the possible results might be interesting.

(Hill, 1985)

and learned how public, university and school libraries had run "human library" events. In years past I've been intrigued to learn how "user experience librarians" strive to make the virtual library more satisfying and how "marketing librarians" expend great energy in figuring out how libraries can not only meet but ultimately exceed clients' expectations. These ideas certainly have informed my own practice.

### Tip 4: Be open and receptive to new ideas.

Just like the bee covered in pollen and bumbling in a seemingly drunken stupor from flower to flower, the abundance of ideas at an event like Super Conference can be a bit overwhelming. Turn information overload into information stimulation. Give yourself permission to be confused. An open mind will filter and make sense of new ideas over time. It's amazing how the discomfort of confusion can transform itself into inspiration once it's had time to settle, sort and synthesize.

Our world would be a much duller place if it were not for the honey bee. The next time a bee is buzzing around your head while you work your garden don't be alarmed and for heaven sake don't swat her.

(Dixon, 2001)

### Tip 5: Turn inspiration into innovation.

The true test of your cross-pollination experiment is the ability to which you can leverage your new knowledge back home in your own garden patch. Can you attract species from across the school to collaborate with you in the library? Here's a little tip: find out what stimulates them, what they're after, and what they're trying to achieve with their students. Then show them how you can help them get there, perhaps in ways they've never imagined before. Attract them with the nectar of your knowledge and then watch the relationship blossom.

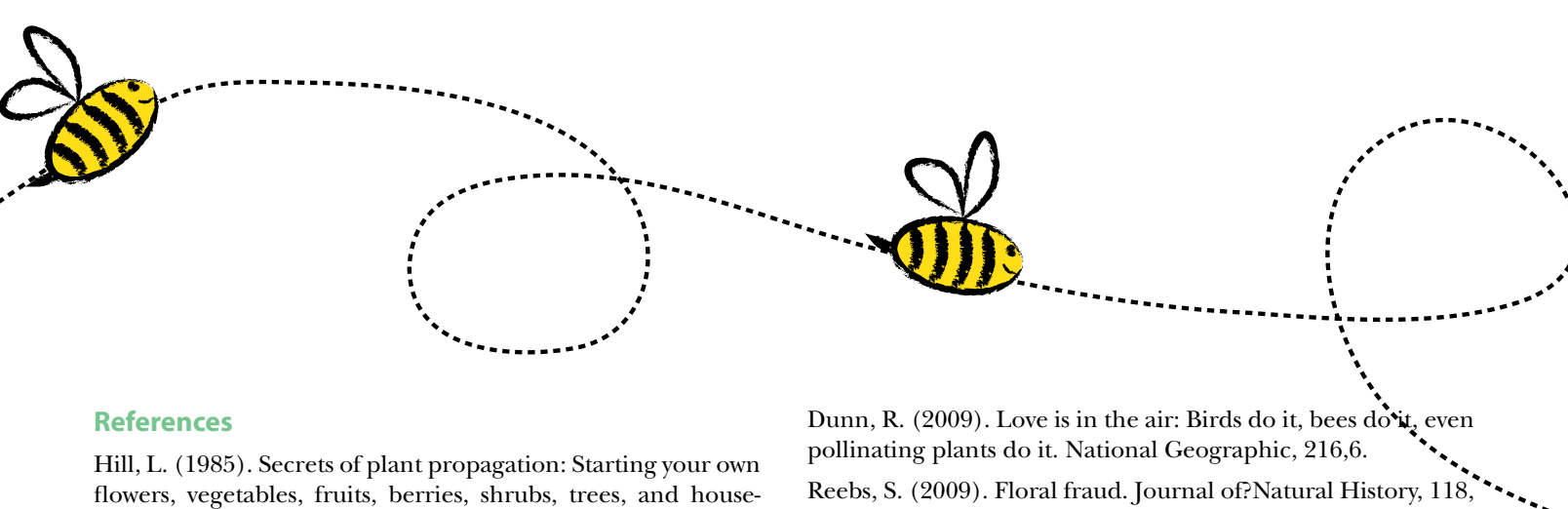
Some orchids are exquisite cheats: instead of offering a nectar reward to their pollinators, they trick insects into alighting on their flowers by simulating the shape, color, or odor of potential mates.

(Reebs, 2009)

As Super Conference approaches prepare yourself for some serious stimulation. And be prepared to blossom in the Ontario Library Association's magnificent greenhouse and incubator for innovation.

In allowing plants to have sex at a distance, pollen, and ultimately flowers, led to explosive diversification, turning a brown planet green and then red, yellow, white, orange, and all the rest.

(Dunn, 2009)



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# Moving From a Wish List to an Advisory Group:

I have listened to my students' reading wishes and collected titles my students would like to read from the first days of my career as a teacher-librarian. What began as a list on the wall at my book fair became a little red book I kept on the counter. My recent creation of a school library blog moved the wish list to an on-line format. Linda Longfield's article, "Books for Boys" in *The Teaching Librarian* was bang on! It inspired me to consider inviting boys to an "unveiling" of new books in an attempt to develop infectious engagement. (Longfield, 2010) Ontario's province-wide literacy test (EQAO) scores indicate just 51% of males at my school scored at or above the provincial standard in reading, compared to 64% of females. (EQAO, 2010) Our school literacy goal is to increase provincial test scores in reading by 5%, with a focus on engaging male readers. School library circulation statistics for the five months between September 2010 and January 2011 identify male readership as 30% less than female, and it decreases from grade 6 to grade 8 by 42%. Unsurprisingly, many boys say they don't read or hate to read.

Mike McQueen wrote in his blog that when he questioned boys who say they hate reading, they agree that they don't hate to read comic books, magazines, websites, newspapers, or nonfiction. He continues: "For the stubborn ones, I ask them to tell me about their hobbies, favorite musicians, sports figures, etc. Then I suggest, 'What if I told you that I had a book right here all about your favorite topic? Would you still say that you hated to read it?'" (McQueen, n.d.) Our library needed an infusion of boy-recommended, boy-selected, boy books.

A passionate plea for support in my attempt to engage our boys was timely, as our principal had decided to focus budget and energy on boys' literacy. My administrator recognized that "access to reading materials in school libraries predicts motivation to read and reading achievement" (Haycock, 2003, p.28) We discussed this need, the selection of books by the boys, and an unveiling. Her idea to book a bus, take the boys to buy the books and add pizza to the lunchtime unveiling enhanced the plan. We created a blog for the boys and linked it to the school library blog, with pages for news, reviews, and a wish list. Informal after-school socialization in the library, combined with an invitation to on-line sharing, and the Boys Book Advisory Team (BBAT) began to generate interest. The idea was rolled out to staff and an e-announcement was produced, inviting interested boys to sign up in the library. BBAT blog address business cards were given to more than forty boys from all three grades who registered.

To help draw the boys in for a selection meeting, I brought in a collection of graphic novels from the Peel District School



Photographed at S & B books, The Beguiling and Loughheed Middle School Library by L Holwerda



Leslie Holwerda

# A middle school story about boys and reading

Board professional library. Using cookies and an afternoon away from classes I was able to enlist the help of twelve boys who enthusiastically reviewed, shared and filled out BBAT order forms. Arrangements were made to visit S & B Books to buy non-fiction and ‘fantasy’ fiction. In order to guarantee successful shopping, I investigated the vendor of the graphic novels and found they were purchased from The Beguiling (a comics and graphic novel retail store) in Toronto. Literacy funding from the school of \$2 000.00 would pay for the books and a bus to both vendors. The date was arranged: March 10, leaving at 9:15 and returning by 2:15—two stops and twelve boys. Permission forms were accompanied by growing excitement.

## Now about the Fallout!

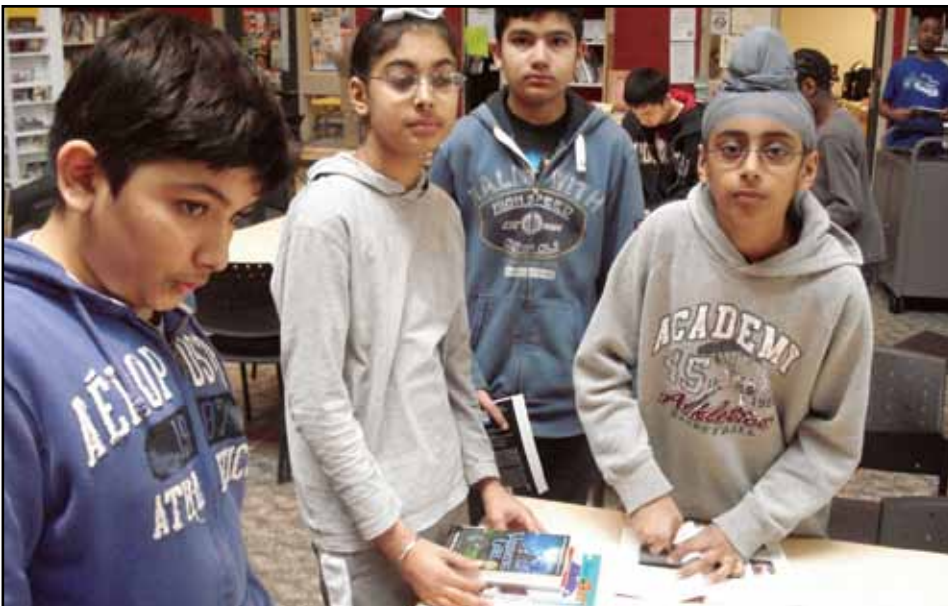
A group of girls came to me wondering why the girls didn’t have a blog. “It’s not fair.” Thus, GirlZONE was created and Jennifer Keller, a grade 7 teacher, jumped at the chance to

meet with the girls and work with them. When information about the BBAT trip leaked out, I heard once again about fairness. Successful negotiations with the principal resulted in coverage for Ms. Keller’s classes to allow her to accompany us, and an additional \$500.00 from the literacy budget matched by library funds for the girls to purchase books. Twelve girls would join the book buying trip, and adjustments were made to the logistics of the day.

Back to the boys—even our “late arriver” was on time on the day of the trip. We loaded the bus and drove first to S & B Books in Mississauga. S & B staff was clearly as excited as we were. They provided snacks and as much help as needed. One of the most interesting moments occurred when most of the boys were huddled around *The Marvel Comic Encyclopedia*. My first reaction was the book was too big, too expensive and therefore not a good purchase. I watched the interaction between the boys as they poured over the book and I listened to their enthusiasm. I wanted more of that in our library. The

boys and I discussed the high cost, and that the book really wouldn’t fit easily in a back pack. We decided to buy the book and add a “For Library Use Only” sticker. (Sadly, the book has since disappeared from the library). With the help of Jennifer Keller and S & B staff, the students found and selected two carts full of books.

The next stop was Toronto’s The Beguiling. The GirlZONE and







BBAT groups split up for lunch and book buying and to accommodate a smaller store space. Andrew Butcher of The Beguiling showed the boys the books they had chosen at our selection meeting and we were able to locate some alternate titles recommended by staff at the store. We boarded the bus and returned to school. In the words of Ishmanjeet, “It was the best thing ever. That field trip was fun.”

The books were sent directly to Duncan Systems Specialists and with the assistance of Sue Orlando from the Peel Board Library Support team, the books were catalogued and delivered to the school within days. Final in-school processing of the books included placing special stickers inside each front cover designating the book as a BBAT Selection 2011. BBAT members who attended the trip and helped process the books were given a gold sticker stating: “Picked for you by”, to sign and affix to the front of their favourite book. The “unveiling” was scheduled for lunch a week after the books were delivered. The twelve boys were each given an invitation to attend and invitations to pass on to two of their friends. The invitation to lunch also included first borrowing rights.

We celebrated the new books with an exciting hour of great conversations and an exhilarating sharing of both pizza and books. Deshawn commented that BBAT at the library was about “dedicated readers at work!” By the end of the day most

of the books had been checked out!

### Follow-up

A core group of eager male readers and the addition to our collection of books preferred by boys will help promote reading to our male students. We anticipate improved circulation before year’s end and improved test scores in the future. Comparison of EQAO results and male readership using circulation statistics will be made from year to year. In order to continue addressing the school goals for improved reading scores, negotiation will be necessary to maintain or increase budget for BBAT purchasing. Continued promotion of reading through BBAT meetings, boys’ only library time, blogging, reviewing, as well as participation in book selection engages male readers by motivating, connecting, and supporting their reading, and fostering a reading community. (OSLA, 2010,p.16) Finally, consideration must continue to be given to the understanding that “specific focused teaching strategies will ultimately improve boys’ literacy. The mere provision of a collection of new books is not enough”. (OISE, 2007, p.4) We have engaged the middle school male readers and recognize the need to develop additional strategies toward increasing school reading scores.



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# The Power of C: Colla

## Super Conference 2011 in photos



One thing is certain. Our world  
is powered by the convergence of  
enormous collaborative effort.

# Collaboration

Photos by Brian Pudden  
and Sarah Lewis



1. The Forest of Reading® booth; 2. The Howlin' Girl Cabaret liven up the crowd at the Friday night party; 3. Anna Porter inspires at a Friday morning plenary; 4. Atom Egoyan keeps the crowd entertained on Friday morning; 5. Diana Swain liven up a Saturday morning plenary; 6. Conference delegates enjoy the libations at Friday night's cabaret; 7. Denise Colby fashions some creative headwear; 8. Shelagh Paterson, Gianna Dassios, Gail Sedgwick and Michelle Fortier talk books at the Forest of Reading® breakfast; 9. Think Recycle brings an electronic recycling program to Super Conference.



# Super Conference 2011 in photos, cont'd...







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**10.** An eagle eye view of the expansive Expo floor; **11.** Ruth Hall and Paul Kay give the OSLA AGM two thumbs up; **12.** Conference attendees make new friends at the Art of Networking; **13.** Michael Wesch broadens delegates' minds on Thursday afternoon's plenary; **14.** The OLAStore\* and S&B books bring their wares to the customers at the on-site store; **15.** Delegates are happy to learn at Super Conference; **16.** As a special treat, free massages were available on-site for delegates willing to brave the long line up; **17.** Parth Shah and Jessigan Jegenanthan interview Susin Nielsen for issue 18.1 of *The Teaching Librarian*; **18.** Stephen Abram consults a panel of young people on their feelings about the future of libraries at the opening plenary; **19.** Volunteers and delegates mingle at Friday night's bash; **20.** The poster sessions on Thursday and Friday are always packed; **21.** The (almost) complete game board of the Super Conference Trivia Challenge.



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Registration for Super Conference 2012, "INNOVATION: Imagine. Innovate. Impact" will be opening in October! Visit [www.accessola.com/superconference2012](http://www.accessola.com/superconference2012) for more information!

# Idea File

**A**s an experienced teacher of 25 years in both the Elementary and Secondary panels, I was pleased to open a division at Edu Reference Publishers Direct Inc. centered on Character Education.

Initially, the resources included books covering virtues/values/attributes on respect, honesty, responsibility, integrity and perseverance, to name a few. As the movement continued, new focuses came to be such as bullying, restorative justice, social justice, and teamwork. Teachers and administrators are asking for resources to help their students with topics such as homosexuality, gay, lesbian, transgender and bisexual lifestyles. Families too have evolved from the traditional nuclear family.

Since I review a myriad of books, I would like to mention a few;

- *The Great Book of Families*
- *My Princess Boy*
- *Calli*
- *GLBTQ Confessions of a Former Bully*
- *Letters to a Bullied Girl*
- *The Changing Face of Modern Families*
- *The Gallup Guide to Modern, Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Lifestyle.*

For more information and additional resources please visit [www.edureference.com](http://www.edureference.com) or our eStore at [estore.edureference.com](http://estore.edureference.com)

**Maureen Kirkness**  
Director Character 'Edu'cation  
A Division of Edu Reference Publishers  
Direct iNc.  
[maureen@edureference.com](mailto:maureen@edureference.com)

**H**ere at The Beguiling we're known for recommending works that can be considered challenging, but we only ever do so for works of quality, skill and depth. On these merits (and with these caveats), we'd like to recommend Pascal Girard's *Bigfoot*, published by Drawn & Quarterly.

Trapped in a crummy little town, Girard's teen protagonist, Jimmy, has a lousy best friend and a penchant for online porn, and becomes a reluctant YouTube sensation when a video of him dancing goes viral, making him a laughing stock. He's a good kid though, with a good heart and a big crush, in a world that he doesn't understand, and that certainly doesn't understand him. Any teenager can relate to Jimmy's story, and will certainly take something away from it. Although there are incidental depictions of nudity and sexual activity (just as there are in the lives of its readers), *Bigfoot* is one of those rare books that is full of heart and so perfectly appropriate for its audience that it's worth taking a small risk on in your library.

**Andrew Woodrow-Butcher**  
Director, Library Services  
The Beguiling  
[www.beguiling.com](http://www.beguiling.com)

## What one or two titles have AROUSED a lot of interest in your organization?

**G**oodMinds.com, Brantford Ontario provides a very unique selection of books as we have a very large collection of First Nations, Métis and Inuit books, as well as a school library collection (JK -8), and Early Education Collection and a Secondary Fiction collection. All of our collections support curriculum and literacy expectations. There are many titles to arouse the interest of our customers — below are two of them:

*The Search for Wondla* by Tony DeTiterlizzi

When a marauder destroys the underground sanctuary that Eva Nine was raised in by the robot Muthr, the twelve-year-year-old girl is forced to flee aboveground. Eva Nine is searching for anyone else like her, for she knows that other humans exist, because of an item she treasures—a scrap of cardboard on which is depicted a young girl, an adult, and a robot, with the strange word, “WondLa”. Two-color illustrations throughout reveal another dimension and, for those readers with a webcam, the book also features Augmented Reality in several places, revealing additional information about Eva Nine’s world.

*Pond Circle* by Betsy Franco

Following the same rhythms and cumulative formula as the nursery rhyme “The House That Jack Built”, Franco creates a lively

introduction to the ecosystem of a woodland world. Close-up images of specific animals will delight the youngest kids, while the large type and repeated phrases are well suited to the needs of beginning readers, who will also enjoy learning more in the final “Facts to Ponder” spread of detailed information.

**Marlene**  
**GoodMinds.com**  
**libraries@goodminds.com**

**W**ell that is one of the most interesting requests we have ever received. There are actually literally hundreds of titles in our inventory relating to sex and sexuality, believe it or not. I think these are often the books that students in my day hid behind the shelves to read. Here is a new one from Greenhaven that looks interesting:

*Sexting*

9780737751628

\$22.90

**James Saunders**  
**Saunders Books**



# Meet the Author

## COURTNEY SUMMERS

### Sex, Bullying and Friendship

**C**ourtney Summers is the author of White Pine selection *Some Girls Are*. She is from small town Ontario and writes young adult fiction. Her other novels are *Cracked Up To Be*, and the latest, *Fall For Anything*. *Some Girls Are* is a compelling account of how a girl is ostracized and understands the implications of her previous behaviour.

**TingL:** Sex, like bullying, figures largely as a tool for power in *Some Girls Are*. The teen-aged characters are carving out their identities and they use their sexual relations as marks of their social status. Can you comment on how the characters objectify sexual partners and how you see this reflected in society?

Courtney Summers: In *Some Girls Are*, Regina is assaulted by Anna's boyfriend, Donnie. When she confides in her long-time rival, Kara, about this, Kara spreads lies to gain the upper-hand in their clique. Much of the torture Regina endures in the book is motivated by her former friends refusing to believe the truth. What happens to Regina is devastating and horrific and they use it against her in a power play, which is awful. It was very

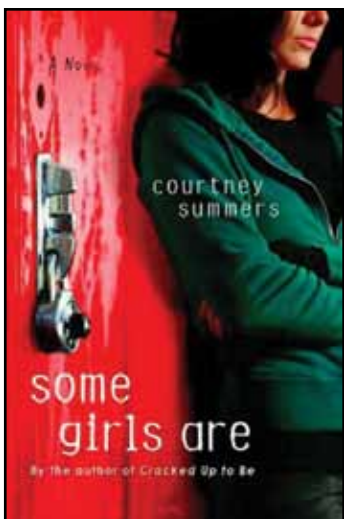
difficult to write. Victim-blaming is something that, unfortunately and inexcusably, happens too much in today's society. I have lost count of how many times I've heard people say that victims of sexual assault are "just asking for it" and it makes me *furious*. *Some Girls Are* is, in part, a commentary on that. I wanted readers to be frustrated and angry at how unfair it was. I wanted them to look at those sections of the books and think, "That is NOT okay."

**You dropped out of high school at the age of fourteen. You have said that you preferred self-directed learning. What could the education system have offered to make you change your mind?**

That's a great question, but I'm not sure the education system could have done anything to make me change my mind! Different people thrive in different environments. I didn't leave because the school failed me and I don't think my leaving means I failed school. It just means I needed to travel a different path to realize my potential.

**Bullying is one of the main themes of *Some Girls Are*. It is the currency through which a group of girls acquires status. Were you bullied at school, or were you the bullier? Is bullying inevitable?**

I experienced bullying from other girls when I was in school and I've also bullied other girls. As depressing as it sounds, I do think bullying is a bit inevitable, even as everyone works hard to promote awareness and prevention. High school is such a microcosm of life; all of these teenagers are in a building trying to figure out who they are and what they want from themselves and each other, which tends to create some pretty explosive social dynamics. I think bullying (unfortunately) is part of that. Perhaps not to the degree as in *Some Girls Are*—but I think it's there.



## Catherine Harris



**I notice that adults are kept very much out of the loop as events unfold in *Some Girls Are*. Even in extreme situations, adults are only used as threats and not asked for help. What approach should educators take to opening lines of communication?**

It's hard because girl bullying is often psychological. It's not usually physical; it's not "loud." A lot of the time, bullying happens between girls who are friends, which makes them reluctant to seek intervention when the situation starts getting out of hand. I think the most educators can do—the most anyone can do—is to observe and to offer to listen and help if they suspect something is going on.

**Your books describe realistic social situations. Yet you profess a fascination with zombies! What kind of books did you like to read as a young adult?**

I love zombies, it's true! When I was a young adult, I really enjoyed books like *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky, *Jurassic Park* by Michael Crichton and the Harry Potter series.

**Your characters speak in a very authentic contemporary fashion. Are you concerned that it will date quickly?**

Not really—I try not to make a lot of pop culture references in my work but as an author of contemporary realistic fiction, it's kind of unavoidable that it ends up a snapshot of a certain time and place.

**You took up photography and acting, and you play the piano! Do these other artistic pursuits inform your writing?**

I think they have definitely informed my approach! Acting helped me figure out how to listen and gave me a real understanding of dialogue. I'm a very visual person and I think in pictures when I write. Music is a kind of emotional bookmark for me—I like to listen to music that complements the kind of scene I'm writing (like a sad song for a sad scene) because it helps me get into that frame of mind. If I have to walk away from the computer in the middle of what I'm working on and then come back to it later, putting on the song I was listening to helps me re-establish the mood I was in and I can dive back into the scene.

**How would you feel about having your books made into graphic novels or movies?**

I think it would be awesome! I'd love to see that happen. But if it doesn't, that's okay too. I feel lucky to see my stories in print. Anything after is icing on the cake.

**You explore the nature of friendship and loyalty. What makes a good friend?**

Friendship is ALL about equal give and take, in my opinion. A good friend is present, listens, is supportive, is there when you need them and just 'gets' you. And if you're a good friend, you're all these things to that person too!

**Thank you for giving our readers some insights into you as an author, your novels and some of the serious social concerns faced by young adults today. ■**

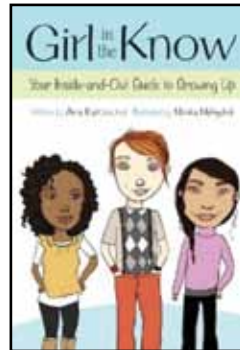
# Book Buzz



## **Amazing You!**

**Dr. Gail Saltz with Illustrations by Lynne Cravath**  
**NY: Penguin Young Readers' Group, 2005**  
**ISBN 0525473890**

Directed towards a pre-school audience, *Amazing You!* introduces preschoolers to the proper names for their “private parts” and explains their functions without going into the unnecessary detail; in a note to parents, the author explains that most children between the ages of one and six “are not ready to hear about intercourse and do not need to know about it yet.” She emphasizes the importance of being honest with children while only giving them “the amount of information they can understand.” She counsels parents not to be excessively concerned about masturbation but to respond to it by telling children that they should only touch themselves in private—and she provides this advice to children in the book. Illustrations of male and female children, adolescents and adults—useful tools in answering young children’s questions about the human body—feature Caucasian and African American people. This book could be useful for teachers working with young children or for older students studying parenting.



## **Girl in the Know**

**Anne Katz, R.N., Ph.D. Illustrated by Monika Melnychuk**  
**Toronto: Kids Can Press, 2010**  
**ISBN 9781554533039**

Did you know that ex-U.S. President Bill Clinton had to get hearing aids at age 51 as a result of his participation in high school bands and other exposure to loud music? This is one example of the information that Anne Katz uses to advise pre- and early-adolescent girls about a wide variety of health concerns. A random sample of the topics covered includes body image, body piercings, diet, ear maintenance and physical and psychological changes. The extensive text and detailed index give this book a grown-up feel but the vocabulary and content are geared to tweens and some early teens. Monika Melnychuk’s illustrations lighten and brighten up the book.

## **Doing it**

**Melvin Burgess**  
**Penguin, 2004**  
**ISBN 9780141018034**

Although not delicate in the way it presents teenage sex, Melvin Burgess’ novel is very sensitive to the feelings of teenage characters as they cope with their own insecurities and uncertain-

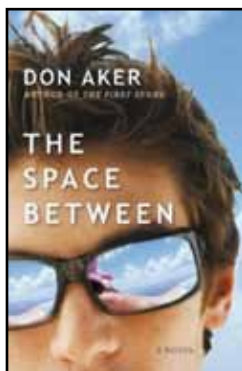


ties, family pressures and, in one case, sexual manipulation by a teacher. Mature teenage readers will appreciate the authenticity of the teenage voices and will learn from the insightful presentation of the complexity of human relationships.

## **i know it's over**

**c.k. kelly martin**  
**NY: Random House, 2008**  
**ISBN 9780375945663**

In *i know it's over*, c.k. kelly martin explores friendship, communication and family while describing the effects of a teen pregnancy and an abortion on the relationship between two teenagers. Likeable, flawed, inconsistent and, as a consequence, real, the three main sixteen year old characters are the hockey-player narrator, his “girl-next-door” ex-girlfriend and the bright, sensitive and popular long-time friend who is coming to terms with his sexual identity. The narrator’s acknowledgement of the possible existence of “remotely cool librarians” provides an extra reason to include this novel in your library.



**The Space Between**  
by Don Aker

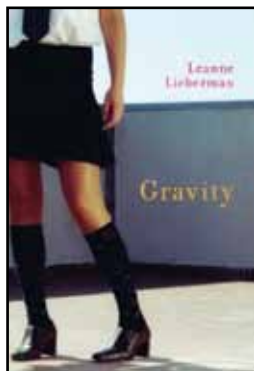
**Toronto: HarperCollins, 2007**  
**ISBN 9780002008501**

"I am going to Mexico to get laid," declares the "practically eighteen" year old protagonist at the beginning of *The Space Between*. However, Don Aker's novel develops into a sensitive account of how the protagonist comes to realize the price paid by gay teenagers when they reveal who they really are, and of the potentially tragic cost to a family when a teenager's trust is repaid with denial. Although the novel appears to be a young adult novel about teenage relationships, it turns out to be a novel for both teens and adults about really listening.

**Gravity**

by Leanne Lieberman  
**Orca Book Publishers, 2008**  
**ISBN 9781554690497**

In *Gravity*, fifteen year old Ellie Gold struggles with the conflict between her love of her parents and her religion, and the sexual identity with which she is coming to terms. The novel explores the oppressive nature of an interpretation of a religion that is tainted with paternalism and intolerance. It also

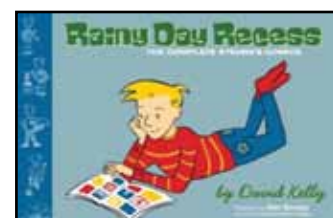


shows the destructive effects of discrimination. It affirms the importance of a physical relationship having a spiritual foundation (at least for the protagonist), and, finally, demonstrates the necessity of accepting oneself and of receiving acceptance from others.

**Pornography**

Debbie Nathan  
**Toronto: Groundwood Books, 2007**  
**ISBN 9780888997678**

Recognizing that pornography is more readily accessible than ever, Debbie Nathan presents the results of research to help readers understand the implications of pornography in both their personal lives and in society in general. Explaining that the word pornography has its roots in the Greek word for prostitute, Nathan outlines the history of this social phenomenon and how it has evolved into the industry that it has become today. She explores feminist arguments and issues of censorship and concludes with a chapter on the future of porn, which includes a discussion of the possibilities of teledildonics (sex toys controlled remotely via computers). The journalistic style, detailed research and thought-provoking content make this book accessible reading



that will be useful to senior students researching issues ranging from gender equality and marketing, to censorship and a wide variety of aspects of human sexuality.

**Rainy Day Recess**

David Kelly  
**Northwest Press, 2011**  
**ISBN 9780984594023**

David Kelly's "Steven's Comics" were originally published for an adult audience in LGBT and alternative newspapers between 1995 and 1998. The black and white comic strips about growing up gay and dealing with issues of identity and difference are presented through the eyes of a fourth grader. This new edition intended for young adults in middle and high school (as well as its original adult audience) includes a foreword by advice columnist and "It Gets Better Project" founder Dan Savage. ■



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