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Volume 20, Issue 2

Teaching Librarian

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CHOICE @ your library



THE Teaching Librarian

Volume 20, Issue 2 January 2013 ISSN 1188679X

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choice @ your library

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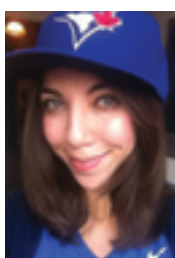
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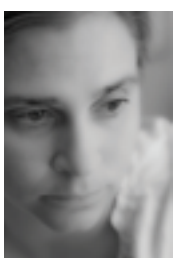
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TingL mission

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. 20, issue 3	“Credit @ your library” Deadline: January 21, 2013
V. 21, issue 1	“Do We @ your library” Deadline: May 10, 2013
V. 21, issue 2	“Crime and Punishment @ your library” Deadline: September 22, 2013

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.

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The Editor's Notebook



Diana Maliszewski

Choice is very important. I've been working on a paper on the impact of readers' choice awards on student engagement and motivation; much of the research I've read for my literature review (some of which I quoted in my blog post <http://mondymollymusings.blogspot.ca/2012/08/extrinsic-rewards-and-badges-without.html>) indicates that allowing text choice is crucial to creating motivated readers.

“

In this issue, you'll hear about student choice in selecting books for independent reading, the process for choosing books to purchase for school libraries, and how Faculties of Education can encourage teacher-candidates to choose to work with school library staff

Giving teachers a choice can be equally as important. Educators and educational support staff in the publically funded system have been stripped of their right to engage in the process of collective bargaining when negotiating contracts with the passage of Bill 115 in the Ontario Legislature. Sam Hammond, President of the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO) reacted to the legislation by suggesting that, “when it comes to voluntary activities, members may want to take a pause.” Running a club or team is a teacher's choice. As much as it pains me to temporarily refrain from offering extra-curricular activities to my students, I, along with hundreds of other teacher-librarians, am choosing to express my discontent in this manner.

There are so many articles to choose to peruse in our latest edition of TingL. In this issue, you'll hear about student choice in selecting books for independent reading, the process for choosing books to purchase for school libraries, and how Faculties of Education can encourage teacher-candidates to choose to work with school library staff. All of these articles were produced by volunteers — individuals who have chosen to use their limited spare time to contribute to the Ontario School Library Association via this magazine. TingL would also like to thank and welcome Lisa Hascal, our newest editorial board member. We're glad they've chosen to be a part of our organization. I hope that reading this issue will help you to make choices that will enhance your school library and student learning. ■

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

The juxtaposition of letters from Ms. Girndt and Mr. McEwen (*Volume 20, Issue 1, page 31*) was an effective presentation of perspectives on teacher-librarianship. I had read the original article by Mr. McEwen and enjoyed it immensely. Like Ms. Girndt, I too, can relate to McEwen's busy day and I marvel that he or I or any teacher-librarian in a busy school library without a technician or any support staff finds time to teach students as per the *Together for Learning* document, while continuing to meet a full spectrum of student needs. And, I appreciate that McEwen chose to see the humour in a situation that can be both rewarding and frustrating.

I noticed in the article “TingL Wants You!” that the magazine is seeking “entertaining pieces that make readers think about the profession”; clearly, McEwen's original article hit the mark. So thanks, Ian for your entertaining and thought-provoking piece; and thank you, too, Marilyn for sharing the thoughts his writing provoked.

Carrie Adams

Carla Wintersgill

21st Century Choose Your Own Adventure

Coliloquy: Digital publishing that lets readers choose

Choose Your Own Adventure books were the best-selling adventure novels that put readers in the shoes of the protagonist, asking them to select the course of action. They dominated the children's book world in 1980s and 90s, selling 250 million copies between 1979 and 1998.

Coliloquy, a digital publishing startup, is not associated or affiliated with Choose Your Own Adventure, however, its new venture evokes the adventure series with a 21st century flair. Available on the Kindle reader, NOOK Tablet, and other Android platforms, Coliloquy titles seek to re-imagine the traditional narrative structure. Rather than one linear plot, Coliloquy titles offer a series of pathways, creating an interactive reading experience where the reader selects how the plot will progress.

While there are currently less than 20 titles (both adult and young adult fiction) available through Coliloquy, it is expanding its repertoire with a focus on serials using real-time data feedback from readers. On Coliloquy's blog, Kira Snyder, author of the *Dead Letter Office*, admits a character from her book will be playing a larger part in the sequel thanks

to the percentage of votes he received as a potential love interest for the main character.

What does this mean for the future of books? The Coliloquy model has the potential to create a truly engaging, customized reading experience that is sure to intrigue those who value choice! ■

For more information:

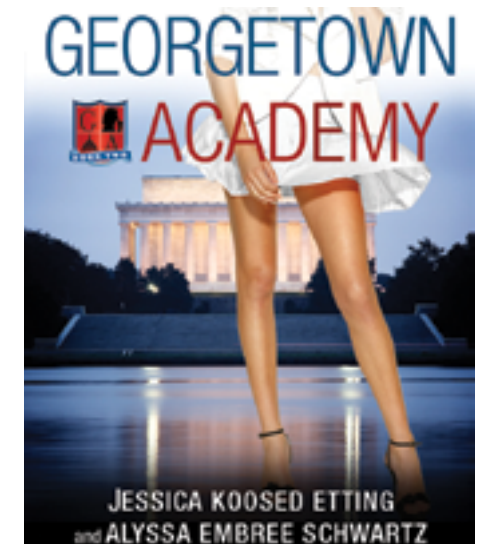
Visit the Coliloquy website:
www.coliloquy.com

Read more:

The Atlantic:
“The Data-Driven, 21st-Century ‘Choose Your Own Adventure’ ”
<http://bit.ly/WFq2qu>

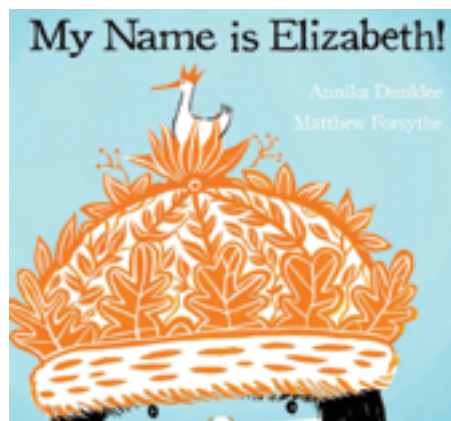
WebProNews:
“Coliloquy Brings Interactive Reading To Kindle”
<http://bit.ly/Pd5sh7>

Two YA titles from Coliloquy's catalogue, Georgetown Academy and Witch's Brew.



Book Buzz

Derrick Grose



My Name Is Elizabeth!

Annika Dunklee

Illustrated by Matthew Forsythe

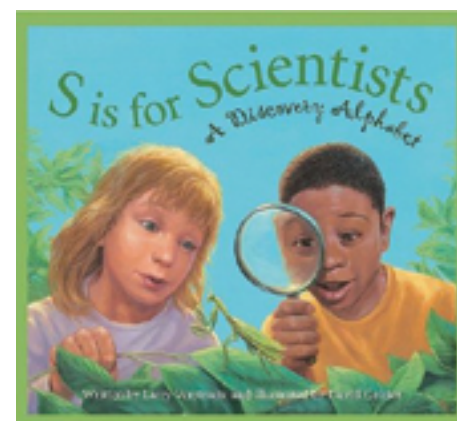
Toronto: Kids Can Press, 2011

ISBN 9781554535606

Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee year would have been a perfect time to share this book with pre-schoolers or primary students but its theme has an enduring relevance. Proud of her name, Elizabeth needs to learn appropriate ways to assert herself and stand up to those who would abbreviate or otherwise corrupt her name. The two-toned illustrations in this book won it the CLA's 2012 Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Illustrator's Award (<http://bit.ly/VAfona>).

Ironically, choosing how to approach the “Book Buzz” for the Choice @ your library issue of Teaching Librarian was a bit of a challenge. This column could have been about “choice” as an alternative to censorship, but the challenge of finding a relevant picture book about censorship put an end to that idea. A search for books that had “Choice” in their titles (ranging from Betsy Rosenthal's *Which Shoes Would You Choose?* to William Styron's *Sophie's Choice*) came to an end because of a dearth of recent Canadian selections meeting the criteria.

Instead, the suggestions that follow are a sampling of choices made by book award juries (other than those for the OLA's Forest of Reading—although there is some overlap in nominees). Hopefully both the titles and the links to the lists of book awards will be useful to you in giving researchers and readers more choice @ your library.



S is for Scientists: A Discovery Alphabet

Larry Verstraete

Illustrated by David Geister

Chelsea, Michigan: Sleeping Bear Press, 2010

ISBN: 9781585364701

In *S is for Scientists: A Discovery Alphabet*, Larry Verstraete reveals the faces and facts behind famous and (and sometimes unplanned) scientific discoveries ranging from Scotchgard to the ninth “planet,” Pluto. Each discovery is associated with one letter of the alphabet and a four-line verse serves as a caption for an illustration of the verse; the story associated with the discovery is told in three or four paragraphs in a sidebar. This prose text extends the audience for this book beyond the obvious target group of students learning the alphabet and participating in choral reading. The book was awarded the McNally Robinson Book for Young People Award, younger category by The Manitoba Writers' Guild and the Association of Manitoba Publishers in 2012 (<http://bit.ly/SglHYX>).



Case Closed? Nine Mysteries Unlocked by Modern Science

Susan Hughes

Illustrated by Michael Wandelmaier

Toronto: Kids Can Press, 2010.

ISBN 9781554533626

Franklin's ships, Canada's only lost National Historic Sites (the subjects of many media reports in 2012), are relics of one of the nine mysteries covered by Susan Hughes in *Case Closed? Nine Mysteries Unlocked by Modern Science*. This extensively illustrated book, targeted at grades three to six, focuses on how science has been used to investigate a wide range of mysteries including the murder of Egypt's first female pharaoh, the disappearance of the ancient Arabian city of Ubar and the sinking of a modern Israeli submarine. This title won the Canadian Children's Book Centre's 2011 Norma Fleck Award for Canadian Children's Non-Fiction (<http://bit.ly/POPABc>).



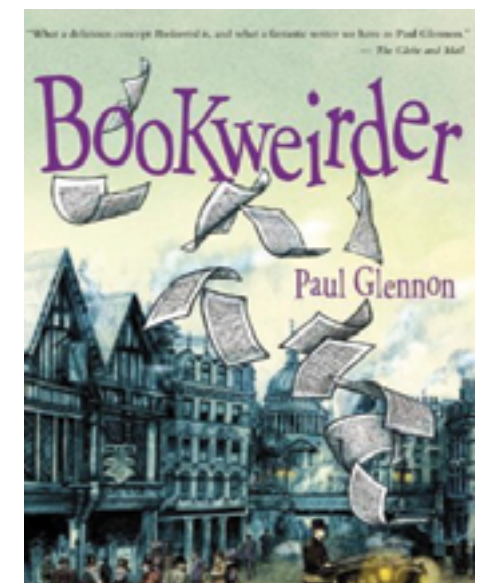
All Good Children

Catherine Austen

Victoria, B.C.: Orca Books, 2011.

ISBN 9781554698240

In *All Good Children*, Max, a 15-year-old rebel, takes the lead in resisting the efforts of a powerful chemical corporation to reduce citizens, starting with students, to nothing more than passive and compliant subjects serving commercial interests. Many elements of this novel, ranging from the protagonist, an exceptionally talented adolescent misfit and prankster, to the social influence exercised by corporations, raise questions about whose interests have priority in contemporary schools and in society in general. This dystopian novel was the winner of the CLA's 2012 Young Adult Canadian Book award (<http://bit.ly/X9Ys4X>).



Bookweirder

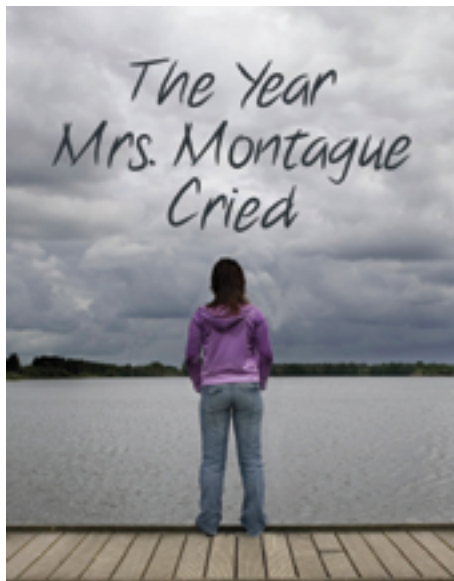
Paul Glennon

Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2010

ISBN 0385665482

When the boring routine of life in the English countryside drives Norman Jespers-Vilnius to seek refuge in a dusty library, he finds himself, literally, caught up in the stories on the shelves. When blinking does not restore the waking boy to familiar home surroundings, he finds himself in a fictionalized version of the world. Struggling against enemies and trying to rescue new found friends, the protagonist travels to nineteenth century Paris and into the Medieval world before discovering the family secret that is responsible for taking him out of his own time. This sequel to the 2008 novel *Bookweird* is the winner of the 2011 Young Adult Book Award for Excellence in Canadian Literature of the Fantastic from The Sunburst Award Society (<http://bit.ly/Xa3BKm>).

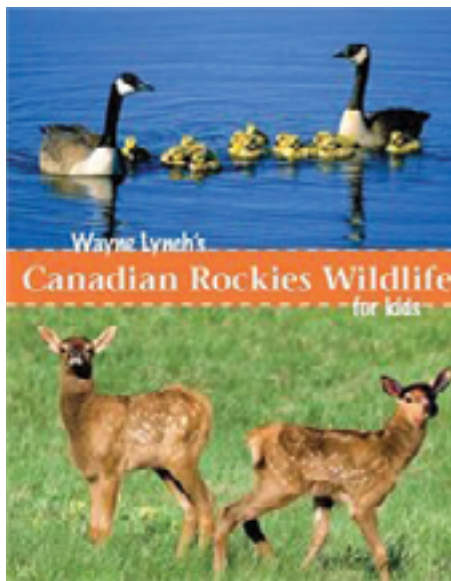
continued on page 10



The Year Mrs. Montague Cried

Susan White
Charlottetown, PEI: Acorn Press, 2010.
ISBN 9781894838573

Taylor, a girl in Grade Four, seems to be enjoying a new school year until the day her teacher cries. Through the protagonist's journal, the novel, *The Year Mrs. Montague Cried*, reveals a young girl's struggle to come to terms with her brother's terminal illness in the same year that her teacher's son was killed in a car accident. Recommended for Grades 5-7, Susan White's poignant first novel won the Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia 2010 Atlantic Writing Competition and the 2012 Ann Connor Brimer Award for Children's Literature from the Atlantic Book Awards (<http://bit.ly/Rfw4fZ>).



Canadian Rockies Wildlife for Kids

Wayne Lynch
Banff, Alta.: Summerthought Publishing, 2011
ISBN 9781926983059

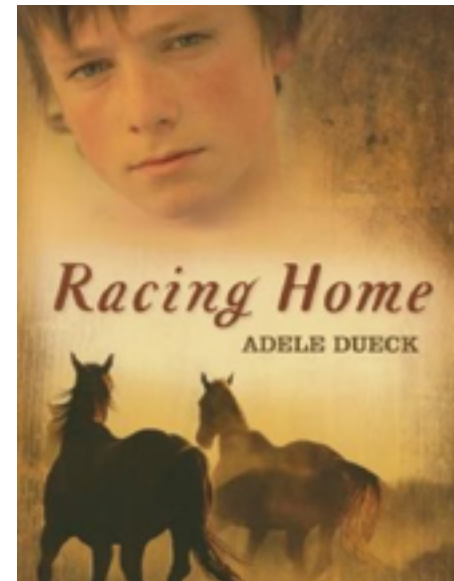
Did you know that only male elk, deer and moose grow antlers but both male and female mountain goats grow horns? This is one example of the sort of trivia that complements the gorgeous wildlife photography in *Wayne Lynch's Canadian Rockies Wildlife for Kids*. The clearly written text would be accessible to an elementary school audience but not beneath the interest of middle school and junior high school readers. There are sidebars featuring Fast Facts about the size, habitat and diet of the animals plus "strange but true" facts. This colourful and engaging book won the Books Publishers' Association of Alberta Children's and Young Adult Book of the Year award in 2012 (<http://bit.ly/Rfwenu>).



When I Was Small

Sara O'Leary
Illustrated by Julie Morstad
Vancouver: Simply Read Books, 2011
ISBN: 9781897476383

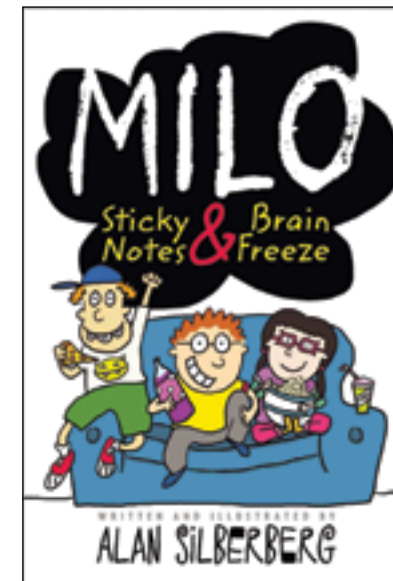
When young Henry expresses his wish that he had known his parents when they were small, his mother revels in indulging him with imaginative tales; the book brings to life her own childhood dream of having her own small boy and telling him stories in which they can be small together. Simple, colourful illustrations bring to life the mother's whimsical notions such as swimming in a birdbath and having a ladybug as a best friend when she was small. This picture book was the winner of the BC Book Prizes 2012 Christie Harris Illustrated Children's Literature Prize (<http://www.bcbookprizes.ca/winners/>).



Racing Home

Adele Dueck
Regina, Sask.: Coteau Books, 2011
ISBN: 971550504507

In *Racing Home*, Adele Dueck paints a vivid picture of prairie communities on Canada's frontier at the turn of the century. Here, people are struggling with a foreign language and unfamiliar landscape; towns are popping up just ahead of the railway and buildings are popping up just ahead of the issuance of deeds to land. In this context, Erik, a Norwegian immigrant who is unhappy about being dragged to a new land by his mother and his stepfather, forms a special relationship with his cousin Olaf and Olaf's family as the boys nurture an abused horse until it recovers its form as a champion. The novel won the 2012 Saskatchewan Book Award for Children's Literature (<http://www.bookawards.sk.ca/index.php>).



Milo Sticky Notes and Brain Freeze

Alan Silberberg
Toronto: Aladdin, 2011
ISBN: 9781416994312

In an interview with *The Guardian*, Alan Silberberg states that in writing *Milo Sticky Notes and Brain Freeze* he learned how to mourn the mother he had lost when he was nine years old. Amazingly, Silberberg succeeds in inspiring both tears and laughter in writing and illustrating a poignant novel about a boy who is struggling to fit into his middle school world while coping with the death of his mother. This book has been recognized by the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators with the Sid Fleischman Award for 2011 for exemplary writing for children in the genre of humor, and by the Quebec Writers' Federation with their Prize for Children's and Young Adult Literature. Silberberg entertains while also providing a guidebook to coping with loss for audiences of nine years of age and up (<http://bit.ly/UC2jyH>).

Next year readers can look forward to a new source of recommendations when choosing First Nations, Métis and Inuit literature for young people. CODE, a Canadian NGO dedicated to promoting development through education has announced the **Burt Award for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Literature for young people** (<http://www.codecan.org/get-involved/burt-award-canada>). In partnership with the Assembly of First Nations, the Métis National Council, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the National Association of Friendship Centres, the Association of Canadian Publishers, and the Canada Council for the Arts, the Award will be given annually to three English-language literary works for young adults (aged 12 through 18) by First Nations, Métis or Inuit authors or translators. CODE commits to distributing 2500 copies of each winning title to schools, libraries, and Friendship Centres that serve First Nations, Métis and Inuit youth across Canada. ■

Meet the Author

Conor McCreery

Evelynne Bernstein



Kill Shakespeare authors Anthony Del Col, left, and Conor McCreery.

Kill Shakespeare is an award-winning, all-Canadian graphic novel series that depicts a world where William Shakespeare's greatest heroes band together against his most ominous villains. Their mission? ...to track down and kill — or save — Britain's greatest writer, the Bard himself! The action series is written by Authors Anthony Del Col and Conor McCreery.

TingL: How did the two of you get together and come up with the idea to start a series about Shakespeare?

Conor McCreery: Anthony and I actually went to the same business school in Southern Ontario, Wilfrid Laurier University. We were a couple of years apart and a mutual friend connected us after he graduated. We bonded over our love of the Gordon Korman book, *No Coins Please*. From there we worked on a number of projects together, and one day, while brainstorming video game ideas, Anthony made a joke about Kill Bill and killing a DIFFERENT Bill. Pretty soon we were talking “Billy” Shakespeare and the rest, as they say...

What is the premise of the series?

Kill Shakespeare is an action adventure series that pits all of the Bard's greatest heroes against his most menacing villains on a quest to either kill, or save, a mysterious wizard by the name of...

Wait for it...

Wait for it...

William Shakespeare!

(oh yeah, we just blew your mind...)

Why “Shakespeare”, and not, say, Dickens?

Funny you should ask about Dickens. At one of our first conventions we met a fan who was also a HUGE Dickens fan, and after talking we inspired him to try on a Dickens mash-up — so maybe that will come to pass...

As for the Bard? Well, Anthony and I both were blessed with

good English teachers who made the plays come alive for us, and of course growing up in Ontario means you tend to make at least one pilgrimage to the Stratford Festival, which is arguably the best place to see Shakespearean theatre on the continent (no offense Oregon).

How true to the Shakespearean plays are the characters?

Reasonably true. We tried to ground the characters in the reality of who Shakespeare made them to be, but we also don't feel constrained to keep the characters exactly the same. In our world, for example, Juliet has survived her ordeal with Romeo. It is ten or so years later and she has matured into a Joan of Arc type of woman. For us that made sense because we saw Juliet as the strongest character in that play (well, perhaps outside of poor Mercutio).

I think we get almost equal amounts of praise and criticisms based on whether our characters are too close OR too far from the Bard. As they say, you can't please everyone *grin*

Who is the ideal audience for the *Kill Shakespeare* series?

Comic fans or Shakespeare fans? Adults or young adults?

We really think *Kill Shakespeare* casts a wide net. Comic fans love the innovative art and panel layouts by our superlative artist, Andy Belanger. Fantasy adventure fans like the Lord of the Rings tone, Shakespeare geeks love playing “spot the reference” and people who are new to Shakespeare or JUST discovering him have told us that our tale whetted their appetite for the real thing. To me THAT's a real compliment.

How does the collaboration process work between the two writers, the graphic artists and designers? Where does it start, and how does it all come together?

Mostly we use pistols at 10 paces...

Generally, Anthony or I will take the lead on an issue and the other guy will story edit. Then the script goes to Andy and he suggests changes and then draws it. At that point we go back and forth on how the art and the script are meshing, and many times we'll go back and change the script again. Once Andy has done the inks we're pretty much set as to how it is



going to look, although the colouring process adds a lot of nuance and texture to the story.

Did you face any initial challenges in publishing the series?

Because we funded the series ourselves I'd say our biggest challenge was getting investors to believe in our dream of creating a *Lord of the Rings* or *Harry Potter* type of world for Shakespeare's characters.

Marketing wise, it's getting people to look past the “Shakespeare” or not be angered by the “Kill”, but we find when we're at a comic convention and we can chat with

continued on page 14

...continued from page 13

readers they almost unanimously say they love the idea.

You were slated to appear in Boston at the 2012 Shakespeare Association of America Annual Conference. How did that go?

Really well. We found out *Kill Shakespeare* has been mentioned and examined in a few papers already, and we were also mentioned in one of the keynote speeches which was a real thrill. The academics really supported our idea, which was nice.

And we'll be back in 2013 when it comes to our home town in Toronto. We're also going to be providing the entertainment by putting on the *Kill Shakespeare* stage play which we adapted from the graphic novel series.

You are also very popular at the various Comic-con festivals, most recently in

Montreal. What can you tell us about that?

Montreal is a great show. It's a new one, but it has already grown into one of the best conventions going. We put on the stage show there as well, and Anthony oversaw it, performing to a packed house. It was really satisfying since that is where Andy lives — he made a big splash in his hometown.

I think we are well-liked at shows because we really try to engage the attendees. Buy our book or not, if you stop by our table you'll have a good laugh or conversation.

What would you hope for young people to learn from *Kill Shakespeare*?

Well, I wouldn't say we're HOPING for them to learn. We want them to enjoy the read first and foremost, but I don't think it is too difficult to pick up *Kill Shakespeare* and end up with exposure to

some of the greats — *Hamlet*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *Othello*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, any of Falstaff's oeuvre.

I suppose if I wanted them to learn one thing it would be how accessible the Bard's stories really are. That and how visually kinetic they are. For me Shakespeare made sense when I saw *The Tempest* and watched Caliban romp around the stage. All of a sudden my 15-year old brain went "Dang. This is COOL!"

What's next for the two of you?

More *Kill Shakespeare*. We're working on more comics, further revising the stage show, we've been approached to adapt the concept to film or T.V. and we're also developing a mobile game. With all that we don't have a ton of time to develop other ideas.

One day... one day... ■



Elizabeth Gordon

The theme for this edition of *Teaching Librarian* is choice. This past year, among other things, the OSLA council chose to re-work our mission statement. From there we had some thoughtful, lively discussions amongst ourselves and consulted past members for their insight and input. Finally, we made the choices you see here, to succinctly describe our beliefs and values as an association. Perhaps you've seen the updated version posted to our website?

When I was searching for inspiration for this report, Diana Maliszewski, TingL's editor, suggested taking readers through our thinking behind the components of this statement.

The mission of the Ontario School Library Association is to promote, develop and advocate for strong, equitable school library programs throughout the province. The OSLA:

Facilitates dynamic learning experiences utilizing the best available resources, technologies, strategies and learning environments

One way OSLA does this is through the Superconference. Many of you have experienced it, but, if you haven't, consider making it a priority in your annual learning plan. Sessions at the Superconference often lead to members being inspired to try something new in their own school library, and the learning doesn't end when the conference does! Members often connect with each other months later, to ask questions and delve deeper to reflect new learning in their school library programs. Presentations are also posted on the website for future reference.

Promotes a love of reading and a sense of wonder and inquiry

Reading engagement is an important step toward "deep understanding and knowledge creation." According to Together for Learning, "when students are encouraged to pursue their own interests and passions and are free to choose from a rich collection within an inviting environment, they are motivated to read and their reading and depth of understanding improve" (p.16). The annual Forest of Reading program ignites enthusiasm for reading and introduces participants to the talents of Canadian writers.

Instilling wonder and inquiry have always been cornerstones

President's Report

of the school library program. The Discovery and Guided Inquiry process is outlined on page 23 of T4L, and includes a circular representation of the key areas involved in inquiry. This model was referenced in a recent issue of the Capacity Building Series from the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat titled: "Getting Started with Student Inquiry" (<http://bit.ly/TzIAcG>).

Strengthens and unifies the voice of school library staff in supporting the effective operation of school libraries

We wanted to recognize that we are an association that represents all school library programs in Ontario, and school library programs operate in many different ways. We may have our own preferences on how we would like to see school libraries staffed, but we agreed that the most important consideration is that effective school libraries exist.

Our annual video competition brings to life and celebrates some of the great things that are happening in school libraries across the province.

Strengthens and unifies the voice of teacher-librarians as collaborative curriculum leaders

Learning Partnerships are supported in the Learning Commons vision, where everyone in a school community can work together, modeling how to learn, a process that will hopefully "... become a natural part a student's being" (p.7 T4L). Teacher-Librarians can lend their expertise in planning integrated curriculum lessons in professional learning communities (PLCs) and serve as a key human "resource" listed in School Improvement Plans.

Supports all members with ongoing professional development that will benefit school staff and students

Start with a visit to the website of the OSLA, a division of OLA (<http://www.accessola.org/>).

The Education Institute (EI), also linked to the OLA site, offers online web conferences and courses for professional learning. These sessions are offered at reasonable rates and can be shared among groups participating from one location.

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Kill Shakespeare Conor McCreery, left, Anthony Del Col, middle, and *Kill Shakespeare* artist Andy B., right.

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What a great idea for professional learning communities! (<http://bit.ly/QSsSnJ>) The OLA website, also provides links to the invaluable Superconference materials, mentioned above.

Inside the OLA website, you can find more information about the individual library divisions that are represented. From there, OSLA has its own section with resources posted for easy access, such as links to financial literacy materials developed by OSLA.

Teaching Librarian magazine, published 3 times per year, is full of excellent tips and practical solutions for implementing high quality school library programs in Ontario. It keeps current with titles to inspire reading engagement, professional resources and tools to motivate learners.

The Together for Learning website has been developed to promote implementation of the Learning commons vision and give practical, actionable steps to take in supporting the key components of this vision.



Professional resources offered through the OSLA: *Together for Learning*, and *Teaching Librarian* magazine.

The Toolkit on OSLA website, has been another “go-to” for school library leaders, offering helpful ideas and advocacy tips. It has recently been updated to reflect revisions in curriculum and assessment practices.

Another way OSLA has supported its members with ongoing professional learning has been through the OTF Summer Camp.

The mission of the Ontario School Library Association is to promote, develop and advocate for strong, equitable school library programs throughout the province.

As reflective practitioners, we are comfortable in saying that this mission statement accurately represents where we are right now. It is meant to be a statement that guides us in recognizing our priorities, framing our work and making the choices that are necessary to support that work. We look forward to receiving your feedback. ■



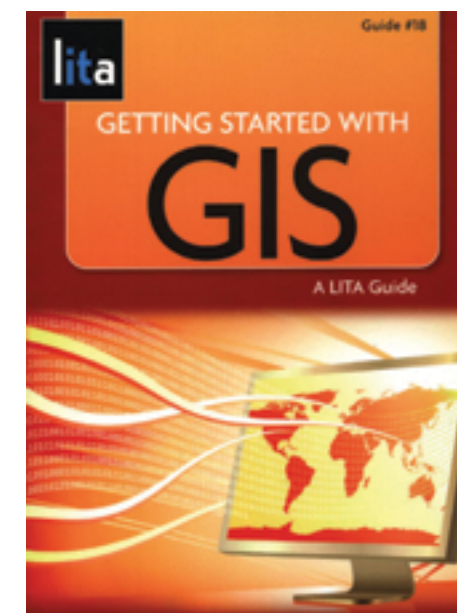
Rob Baxter

Getting Started with GIS (Geographic Information System) Technology, a LITA (Library and Information Technology Association) Guide

Eva Dodsworth
2012; ISBN 978-1-55570-775-0 (alk. paper)

For communication, information science and geography students and staff, teachers, teacher-librarians, and all those who love geography and travel, both past and present

This guide is divided into six parts: “Background”; “Geographic and GIS Awareness in a Web 2.0 Environment”; “A Guide to Web Mapping Applications: Hands- On Tutorials”; “An Introduction to GIS Data and Software”; “Opening Access to Collections with Geodigitization Projects” and “Expanding and Enhancing Library Services with GIS.” There is also a



glossary of terms and a companion website (<http://neal-schuman.com/gis>) to support the URLs mentioned. The challenge is to get through the book without being seduced by all the examples and sites suggested.

Dodsworth takes a cross-curricular approach with her target audience (academic, professional or personal users), moving beyond the idea that mapping skills are used only in the geography classroom for spatial literacy. She explains, “The sheer number of K-12 mapping exercises available in blogs and websites created for and by teachers demonstrates the popularity of it in classroom settings.” In addition, mapping skills are now needed by archaeologists (human culture), architects, artists, biologists (plant life), engineers, environmentalists (natural disasters), and genealogists, among others.

With easy access to maps, Internet users can create their own location profiles based on personal interests: a city’s vegetarian restaurants, sports and recreation centres, crime hotspots, public services, libraries, new and used car dealers, flight patterns, traffic conditions, weather, and much more.

Some applications enable users to easily make cartographically correct maps with customized queries and buffers, ready for printing. Being from Waterloo, Dodsworth uses the Region of Waterloo GIS Locator to guide the reader through the database to find local points of interest. Going a few steps further, by combining the Layer List and Create Custom Query,

Professional Resources

users can find, for example, land most susceptible to flooding. Other exercises will take you around the world, from Balepet, India, to Burlington, Vermont, New York City, London, Paris and Rome. Boy voyage and have a safe trip!

Technology Management Handbook for School Library Media Centers

Lesley S.J. Farmer and Marc E. McPhee
2010; ISBN 978-1-55570-659-3 (alk. paper)

For teacher-librarians, teachers, students and teachers of teacher-librarianship, teachers of education technology, school administrators, IT staff

Based on the library media technologies course currently taught by the authors at California State University-Long Beach, the book draws on the experience and expertise of both a school library educator and a building-level practitioner.

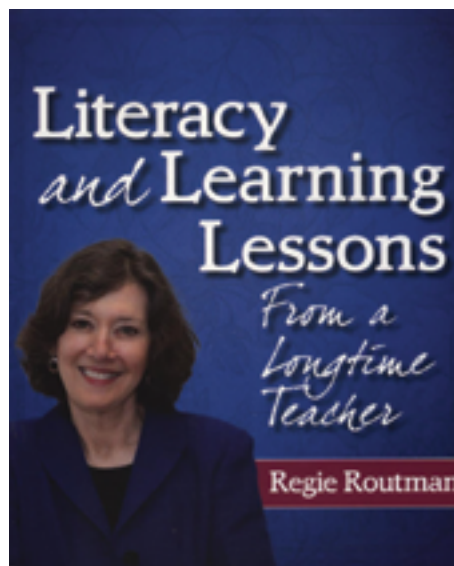
The book’s eight chapters provide the reader with the following: “Introduction to Technology Management”; “Planning for Technology Management”; “Acquiring Technology Resources”; “Technology Maintenance and Troubleshooting”; “Space Planning and Management for Technology”; “Managing Technology Resources for Communications”; “Policies and Procedures for Technology Management” and “Technologies for Professional Development.”

continued on page 18

Useful for both the novice and experienced teacher-librarian, this handbook guides the user through the stages of setting up a school library media centre or creative commons to better meet the needs of the contemporary school's students and staff. Included are tips for setting up an Action Research plan, a sample Equipment Inventory Log, an overall Planning Checklist, a Technology Plan to improve student and teacher computer literacy, plus a "Tech Moment" which highlights the salient points in almost every chapter.

Of interest to the more experienced teacher-librarian with a more established programme is Chapter 8, focusing on Technologies for Professional Development, where we are reminded, "In the final analysis, management of information technology is about change, not about technology. It's about people and organizational behavior, not machines. While the lack of technology is a barrier to change, the presence of technology does not guarantee change."

Recognizing that teacher-librarians may be the lone library professional on site, Farmer and McPhee recommend drawing on the experience and expertise of the school's IT specialists, their district or regional peers through periodic face-to-face or virtual meetings, local, regional, national and international professional organizations, Listservs to connect with other colleagues, and RSS feeds, as well as Professional Learning Communities.



Literacy and Learning Lessons from a Longtime Teacher

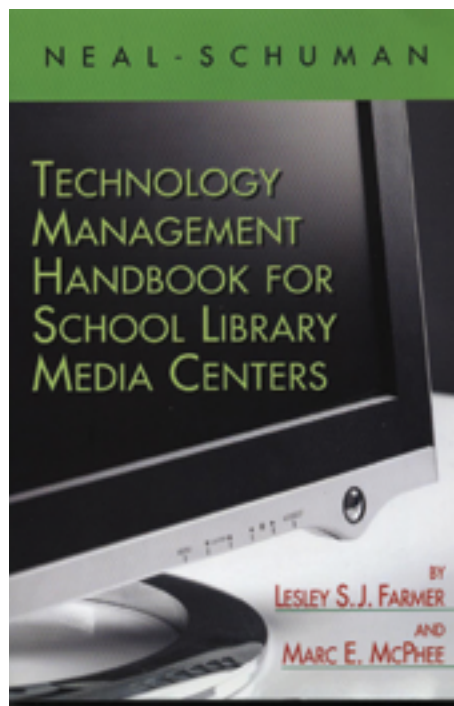
Regie Routman

2012; ISBN 978-0-87207-479-8

For teacher-librarians, teachers, teachers and coaches of literacy, parents, administration, politicians

This short, powerful, practical manual is divided into 100 one or two-page topics or chapters applicable to elementary and secondary teaching. For example: "It's all about relationships"; "Acknowledge our colleagues"; "Ask more vital questions"; "Read professionally"; "Teach rereading"; "Read and write more texts"; "Share our best ideas"; "Use technology judiciously"; "Teach students, not standards." Concrete advice, in the form of a "Take Action" nugget, or a specific step, is provided on almost every page, so that you can carry out her suggestions.

With her many years of experience in Canada and the U.S., Ms. Routman challenges a few current teaching practices. Contrary to the trend at some school boards, she still recommends the teaching of handwriting: "Handwriting still matters — a lot. There. I've said it. In school after school and classroom after classroom, the writing of far too many students is undecipherable, sloppy, and done without pride. . . . Somewhere along the way, many of us got the message that we should leave students alone to form letters and hold the pencil as best they could and not interfere. We are now seeing the results of those misguided beliefs."



Even more 'subversive' is her advice in Advocate for saner practices: "If our schools and districts are pressuring us to act in ways that disadvantage or harm a student or group of students or us educators, we have a moral responsibility to speak up, make suggestions, and lobby for alternative, beneficial approaches." It would be difficult to find more timely advice.

The Library Book

Published in support of The Reading Agency, Copyright in individual contributions held by the authors, Foreword by Rebecca Gray

2012 ; ISBN 978 1 78125 005 1; eISBN 978 1 78125840 1

For students, teachers, parents, librarians everywhere, administration, and even politicians

This compact book has been published in support of The Reading Agency, a London, England-based charity whose mission is "...to inspire more people to read more. We work with many partners but in particular with libraries because they offer everyone equal access to books and reading." Such a novel idea!

Twenty-four well-known, contemporary authors, including Val McDermid (*The Vanishing Point*), Lionel Shriver (*We Need To Talk About Kevin*), Zadie Smith (*White Teeth*) and Karin Slaughter (*Criminal*), have contributed to this gem-in-print. They share their thoughts on reading and libraries, and the pivotal roles they play in people's lives.

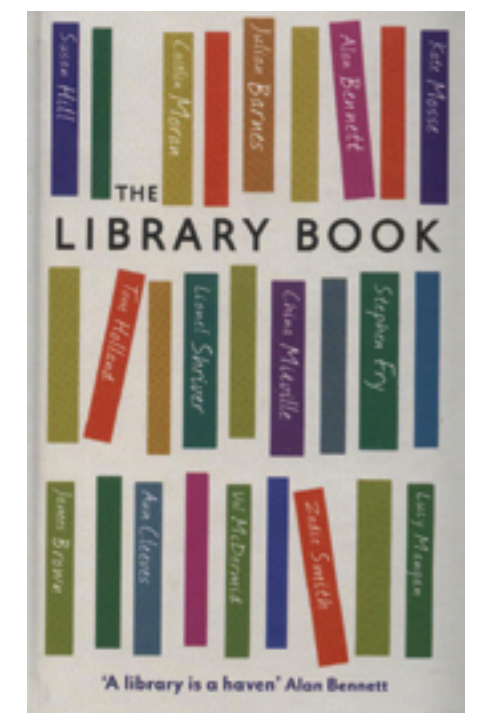
In her short essay, "Fight For Libraries

As You Do Freedom," Karin Slaughter poses and answers the question: "But, why do we need to read? Her answer: "It's not a survival skill. Contrary to how some of us feel, we won't die if we can't read. I think the need for reading boils down to one simple issue: children are selfish. Reading about other people creates a sense of balance in a child's life. It gives them the knowledge that there is a world outside themselves. It tells them that the language they are learning at home is the key to unlocking the mysteries of the greater world."

According to Ms. Slaughter, "...reading creates better societies. This is not a theory. This is a quantifiable fact: there is a direct correlation between the rate of literacy in a nation and its success."

The authors who have provided The Library Book with their works have also donated their royalties to The Reading Agency (<http://readingagency.org.uk>). These funds will in turn be used to further support library programmes, so that by purchasing this publication, you are helping out this charity.

The above books are for sale on-line from the OLASore: <http://www.accessola.com/store/bins/index.asp>. ■



How can we strengthen Ontario's school libraries?

Take action!

Ask your Member of Provincial Parliament to endorse designated library funding for every school in Ontario. Currently, funding for the school library program is at the discretion of each school and/or school board.

A library is much more than books in a room

A properly resourced school library program includes a teacher librarian with library qualifications, a library technician, and support staff. It also includes access to a robust digital media centre, e-resources, and a current print collection.

Did you know?

- * Only 56% of elementary schools have a teacher-librarian and most are allocated part-time?
- * Only 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 schools do not have a library or a library program at all.
- * Students who are in schools without a staffed and properly resourced library program are not receiving the same education as students who have these advantages.
- * There has been a dramatic decline in the percentage of Ontario students who report that they "like to read." However, in schools with teacher-librarians, students were more likely to report that they enjoyed reading.

For more information, facts, and resources on this issue, visit www.accessola.com



Idea File

Introduction by Diana Maliszewski

The number of decisions a teacher has to make throughout the instructional day can be quite overwhelming. A quick Google search suggests 0.7 decisions per minute or 1 500 educational decisions every school day — and that was just the first page of the search results! Making these choices can sometimes be quite challenging, so we asked TingL readers a difficult question: What is the hardest choice you've had to make as a school library professional?

The hardest choice: deciding what to STOP DOING or stop buying or stop providing or what to cut due to either staff cuts and/or budget cuts.

*Lisa Dempster, Teacher-Librarian, Riverdale Collegiate Institute
Toronto District School Board*

To Book Fair or not to Book Fair?

I decided that it served my school better to offer Book Club flyers through the library rather than closing the library to hold a book fair that raised little money. I went to our Budget committee and proposed an increase in my budget funds to compensate for the lost income. The time commitment for training the book fair volunteers, the security concerns, supervision during a book fair and the lost collaboration time far outweigh any monetary benefit.

This year we are offering two months of book club flyers for both the junior and teen readers in a fifteen day span beginning October 1 and ending October 15. The next two month orders will occur in early December and every two months after.
*Leslie Holwerda, Teacher-Librarian/Literacy Coach, Loughheed Middle School
Peel District School Board*

My hardest choices would probably be those connected to work to rule in the past, not running clubs and programs that I loved. I know that a lot of TL's are facing those kinds of decisions right now. Not sure if this applies but I did have a difficult decision about how to react when some of our books get stolen. I used to take it personally until a wise TL said to me that I had to think of it from the students' point of view. Perhaps they have very few books at home or have no chance to own their own books and the books they took from the library were books that they absolutely loved.

*Isabelle Hobbs, Library/Media Facilitator
Durham District School Board*

The hardest choice I've had to make was deciding when to move to a different school. I was at one school for only a year when a colleague begged me to apply for her position as she was retiring. I applied and was short-listed. The interview went well and they offered me the job, but I was torn about whether or not to accept. I felt guilty about "abandoning" that place after a single year but after considering all the factors, I chose to attend the new school.

*Diana Maliszewski, Teacher-Librarian, Agnes Macphail P.S.
Toronto District School Board*

Every day involves making another choice! I have been in the process of choosing an online platform for my library presence...none of which have been particularly successful. My first educational site was a template available free to educators. I tried a board provided class site which was very limited. I loved the options and the opportunity for communication through a blog page and set up a blogger site...access became blocked and still is.

I needed an attractive platform to communicate with our students, something we could all access easily at school or at home. I needed a site that provided opportunities to post book trailers, photos, documents, links or surveys in a student friendly way. We recently chose to create an Edmodo site for our Library and can do all of these things in a safe "Facebook" style format. Our Edmodo site has a student group, a parent group and a teacher group and it was a great choice!

*Leslie Holwerda, Teacher-Librarian/Literacy Coach, Loughheed Middle School
Peel District School Board*

“
The hardest choice I've had to make was deciding when to move to a different school

Connected Library

Julie Millan

QR Codes in the Library



Those small, pixilated squares (also known as QR Codes) have popped up everywhere in the media and libraries have started using them as well.

So what can these little QR Codes offer to libraries and teacher-librarians? They can offer choice in how teacher-librarians share information, choice in how students access information, and choice in how students might share their learning on a particular topic or assignment.

They contain information that when read by a QR Code Scanner on a mobile device, will take you directly and instantly to specific pieces of information. Teachers wishing to create QR Codes need to use a QR Code Generator. QR Codes can link to websites, videos, documents, or podcasts.

The following websites offer just a taste of how teacher-librarians and libraries are using QR Codes to augment their traditional library resources and programming.

ACCESSING INFORMATION



From Tech Trend to Teaching Tool: Taking the QR Code Plunge!
<http://bit.ly/TY218y>

This blog asks readers to consider how QR Codes might fit into the library. The author challenges teacher-librarians to think about how students are using and accessing both the print and virtual resources available in the library and suggests ways QR Codes might encourage students to engage more readily in their library experiences.

QR Codes in the Elementary Classroom & Library Too!
<http://slidesha.re/PSqh1h>

This first resource, written by Gwyneth Jones (also known as the Daring Librarian), describes what a QR Code is and how to create a QR Code. She then offers a wide variety of ideas for using QR Codes in the library including linking to websites, videos, podcasts, book reviews, author pages, and blog posts.

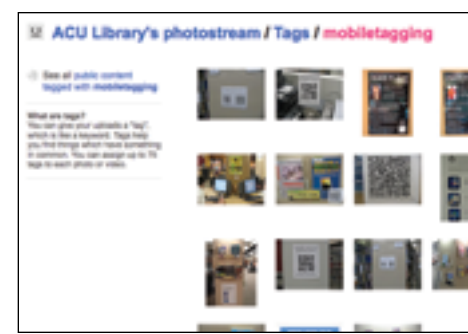


Library Scavenger Hunt
<http://www.thedaringlibrarian.com/2011/03/qr-code-quest-library-scavenger-hunt.html#uds-search-results>

In this Library Scavenger Hunt created for English Language Learners, Gwyneth Jones links creative commons images and clues to QR Codes which she then posts throughout the library. Students complete this QR Code Scavenger Hunt as an interactive and fun way of orienting themselves to the resources and routines of the school library.

Promoting your School Library using QR Codes
<http://www.thedaringlibrarian.com/2011/09/qr-code-scanning-for-parents.html>

Gwyneth also challenges teacher-librarians to promote and share what is happening in their library with the parent community. In this post, she shares an example of how she uses QR Codes to promote the school library with the wider parent community.



Abilence Christian Universiy (ACU) Library: Photo Gallery
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/aculibrary/tags/mobiletagging/>

In this Flickr Photo Gallery, Abilence Christian Universiy (ACU) Library demonstrates how they use QR Codes to promote library events, link to various “how to” videos, and to share themed book lists and “related reads.” There are lots of great ideas for accessing important information around the library.



Library Virtual Tour
<http://www.lawrence.edu/library/tour/>

Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin gives patrons a virtual tour of their library by posting QR Codes in different sections of the library. When

students scan the QR Code, they are linked to information about that particular area of the library as well as a map of the facility.

Collection of YouTube Videos: QR Codes in the Library
<http://bit.ly/Pt8Nsk>

In the first video in this collection, the target audience is students. The librarian explains the purpose for the QR Codes posted around the library and how to access the information using mobile devices. Another video discusses how you might link students to book reviews or additional information about a book by adding a QR Code to its cover. Watch this series of videos to get lots of ideas for using QR Codes in your library.



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Ask Rita Resourceful

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STUDENT LEARNING

Transliteracy — QR Codes and Art
<http://langwitches.org/blog/2011/11/22/transliteracy-qr-codes-and-art/>

QR Code Art Gallery
<http://blogs.southfieldchristian.org/pixelsandpaintbrushes/2012/05/29/qr-code-art-gallery-superheros/>
Both these sites share examples of how to turn a traditional bulletin board display into an interactive learning experience for students using QR Codes. In both examples, students include a QR Code with their art work and writing. The QR Code links to audio recordings of their stories and poetry.

Classmates visit the display of work, scan the QR Code using a mobile device, and complete an activity linked to the display.



Engage Their Minds: QR Codes
<http://engagetheirminds.wordpress.com/category/qr-codes-2/>

Twelve Ideas for Teaching with QR Codes
http://www.appitic.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=83:twelve-ideas-for-teaching-with-qr-codes&catid=1:latest-news&Itemid=302

These two sites share a number of student projects and ideas for integrating QR Codes in student work. Examples include links to student book reviews, online portfolios and resumes, QR Code classroom coupons, interactive bulletin boards, and a QR Code year end reflection.

READY TO GET STARTED? USING QR CODE GENERATORS

In order to create a QR Code, you need to use a QR Code Generator. While there are many free generators available, here are a few that may pique your interest.



Go QR.me
<http://goqr.me/>

This is your basic QR Code generating site. You can choose the size of the QR Code, edit the colour, choose an embed code, link to text or a URL.

Tag my Doc
www.tagmydoc.com

This free service adds a QR Code to documents making it easier to share and retrieve documents. The user uploads a file and a QR Code and a URL is created for that document. The QR Code can then be included directly on a file for printing or sending, downloaded as just the QR Code, or shared via email, Facebook or Twitter.



Voice Memo
<http://qrvoice.net/>

Type a sentence of up to 100 characters and the generated QR Code will speak your phrase when scanned. This is available in a variety of languages.



SnapTags™
<http://www.spyderlynk.com/>

SnapTags are customizable QR Codes that can be purchased by businesses to enable their logos to become interactive. ■

Dear Rita Resourceful,

I feel pretty bad about my total neglect in the buying of gay fiction and LGBTTQ resources at our high school. I'm the librarian at an arts-focused high school and gay students make up a larger proportion of our population compared to other high schools in our region. I'd like to purchase some suitable resources but am anxious about how to begin.

*Signed,
The Rainbow-friendly Librarian*

Dear Rainbow-friendly Librarian:

A great place to begin improving any high school collection is by checking the age and content of your sex-ed books. Your collection should include:

- Texts with inclusive language
- Texts with tips on safer sex for same-sex partners
- Texts from multiple perspectives (not just straight)
- Titles recommended by progressive sex-ed organizations in your community

Dear Rita,

Until recently our school's collection of leveled books used for guided reading were housed in a small storage room. The room is now scheduled to be our new vice principal's office and our principal wants the leveled book collection moved to the library. I have mixed feelings about accepting the books. What's your take, Rita?

*Signed,
Lew L. Quandary*

Dear Lew,

Do you have a choice about whether or not to accept the books? If you do have some say in the matter, you might want to suggest another teacher-only area of the school. One of the best aspects of school library as a learning commons is that kids can take out resources. Guided reading texts by their nature must only be taken out by teachers and it's a shame to waste precious floor area on resources that kids can't borrow.

Dear Rita,

Middle school students just don't take out books! They'd rather surf the

**“
As a librarian, you help students locate the texts they crave, wherever they may be.**

net than even glance at the books on the shelves. They have a point. The dynamic nature of online resources with hyperlinks, search functions, embedded audio video, maps and custom graphics is immensely captivating. Are libraries passé?

*Signed,
R. Buksdun*

Dear R. Buksdun,

The advent of new communication technologies has perhaps diminished the importance of the book and with it, libraries housed in buildings, but



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

what has not diminished is the need for well-written, authoritative and engaging reading material. As a librarian, you help students locate the texts they crave, wherever they may be.

Dear Rita,

I'm taking over a library in a K-5 school where there are very few shelves but a lot of bins. Some of the bins are organized by genre, some by author, and some by subject and some by popularity. I'm reluctant to change the whole system because the students are used to it, but I'm also worried that this will be a shelving nightmare. To bin or not to bin...that is my question.

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...continued from page 25

*Signed,
Yikes*

Dear Yikes,
The former librarian was probably trying to increase circulation but he/she may ironically have turned off some readers. Labeling bins as “fantasy books” or “graphic novels” for example may cause students to ignore books that they might otherwise have chosen because the bin name turns them off. Sticking to Dewey classification is preferable.

Editor’s Note: There is a huge debate about “dumping Dewey” in some school libraries. Shannon McClintock Miller has blogged about ditching the Dewey decimal system for a different model, at <http://vanmeterlibraryvoice.blogspot.ca>. Librarian Liz Burns shares Rita Resourceful’s opinion about alternate sorting systems; she has tweeted on the subject and says “picture Little Liz. 4 schools, about 8 different public libraries before age 13. That’s a lot of systems to have to learn” [Twitter, @LizB, 2012 October 5]



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Barbara McVeigh

Book Choice @ Your Library People Power



Once upon a time, critics had the ultimate say whether a book was good or bad. A reputable critic was a sage on the stage. These days I still read and consider professional reviews, but when it comes to choosing books for my library, I keep in mind that these reviewers don’t necessarily represent my school’s demographic. I do subscribe to trade magazines, but they are not my only tool. These days I want to broaden my conversations about books. I make that extension at three levels: by making connections at school, being involved in board-supported networking, and using social media to exchange opinions and ideas with the wider world.

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Conversations @ School

My book search starts by getting to know the people at my school. Both teachers and students use the resources at the library for a variety of reasons. Talking to both groups not only tells me what kinds of books I should be buying, but also gives our school's population a stake in the library collection.

- **Connecting with teachers:** I've found one way of fostering collaboration with teachers is to ask them for their input on book purchases, either in person or via e-mail. Do they have an upcoming unit which requires new materials? Are they teaching an established unit, but find that there are gaps in the library collection? This approach also opens the door to working together on developing a research unit or a lesson focusing on a particular research skill.
- **Connecting with students:** I enjoy chatting with students when they are signing out their books. I ask them about the kinds of books they generally read, about the book they are they presently borrowing, and which books they would like to see in the library. I especially encourage reluctant readers to tell me what they DO like to read so I keep an eye out for more books of that type. Some say they've been turned into readers because they've found a book they like and the librarian has bought the rest of the series or something similar. As well, the library staff members are the first people students turn to when they need to find materials on specific research subjects. I keep a list of topics students are researching and make a note of any shortages.

Board-level Networking

Now that you've gotten to know your school, you are ready to start buying some books. But are there other criteria to consider? You know what your clients want, but what do they need? Here's where the board library support team comes in.

- **Supporting TLs:** Our board has developed purchasing guidelines to help TLs select resources. When TLs are considering books they should ask themselves:

Does the book:

- Fill gaps in your collection
- Include Canadian content

- Avoid stereotypes
- Reflect board initiatives
- Engage students
- Reflect school community

Is the book:

- Curriculum-related
- High-quality and factual
- Aesthetic
- Informative and thought-provoking
- Current
- Accurate

- **Connecting TLs:** Overwhelmed? Share the load. Teacher-librarian associations within the board at both the elementary and secondary level have organized fiction and nonfiction review committees to determine the level, curriculum connection and appropriateness of selected books. Lists and reviews of recommended books are posted in a TL e-binder for people in my school board to access. We also connect via discussion boards to talk about issues concerning school libraries, including book selection.

- **Connecting with professionals outside the board:** Twice a year, our board organizes a purchasing day with our tendered vendors. It takes place in a big convention hall. It gets pretty full quickly, and there's a lot of buzz. Our tendered vendors not only bring books which fulfill our purchasing criteria, they also offer us advice on which books to buy based on the grades and interests of the students we teach. I've learned a lot about graphic novels, urban fiction and stories of diversity from our passionate reader-vendors.

- In addition, we have access to a board-purchased database, **NovelistPlus**. NovelistPlus contains a vast collection of fiction and nonfiction titles. For each title, there is detailed information available: genre, tone, lexile rating, read-alikes, links to Goodreads and professional reviews, popularity, and age level. This tool is especially great when connecting with students and teachers. For example, if there's a student who has really enjoyed a book about vampires or one about a dystopian society,

I can show him or her how to use this database to find similar titles at the same reading level. Similarly, if teachers are looking for fiction or nonfiction material, NovelistPlus is able to generate lists based on topic, genre and grade. This database is also linked to our e-library catalogue so immediately the searcher can see whether or not the book is in our library. If not, the student or teacher can use our e-library catalogue to make a request for the material.

A Brand New World: Social Media

I love the democratizing, levelling effect of technology. It allows us to use what Clay Shirky calls, "cognitive surplus". Cognitive surplus is the shared, voluntary online work we do in our spare time for the greater good. Social media is an extremely important and powerful tool that allows us to collaborate worldwide. Traditional media, such as professional reviews, represent only one voice and it moves only in one direction: out. With social media, we now have the ability to re-route the traditional path and create conversations. Here are examples of social media that I use extensively:

- **Goodreads.com** – Goodreads is kind of a Facebook for book lovers. Members follow "friends" and can review books, make comments and ask questions, keep track of what they've read and what they'd like to read. Members can even join reading groups and create lists. Its popularity is proven in the fact that the NovelistPlus database has links to Goodreads reviews.
- **Twitter.com** – I have to admit Twitter is my favourite social medium. Just so much good stuff happens there. It's a wonderful way to develop your professional learning network. I've met other teacher-librarians, fellow booklovers and even collaborated on creating book lists. People post great links, book reviews, and discuss what they are reading. In addition, I follow the hashtags #TLchat #YA #FridayReads #ThursdayReviews and #CanLit to get the latest buzz about books. I have also "met" and communicated with authors. Recently, I had Ian Rankin send me a tweet in response to a post I made on his book. How cool is that?
- **49th Shelf.com** – An all-Canadian resource, 49th Shelf's

mission is to be a "one-of-a kind resource for discovering, discussing and indulging in Canadian books". They have a variety of methods for searching for a book: by category, author, or through a recommended reading list. But one of the most unique ways is their Read Local Map. For example, if you were looking for a Canadian book set in southern Saskatchewan, you would simply click on the pins on that map to find out the titles and descriptions. What's even more remarkable, is that this map is all user created. 49th Shelf also allows its members to create recommended reading lists. So far, I've created a list on Sports Literature and Literary Graphic Novels for Secondary School.

Choosing books for my library is one of the favourite parts of my job. It starts with conversations, both local and global. With shrinking budgets, a changing book market and the e-revolution, having these conversations is important in order for TLs to make the best choices for their schools. Conversations allow us to support each other in these choices, to be informed, and to get the most bang for our buck. ■



YOUNG ADULT TITLES!



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Maria Martella

But I Want to Read *That One*



Photo: Erin FitzGibbon

I grew up in a small town that didn't have a school library or a bookstore. My parents were Italian immigrants, and although they did tell me stories, they couldn't read English. I believe I became a reader because I had a teacher in Grade 2 who told me about the public library. Visiting the library on my own, having access to all those books, and being allowed to choose whatever I wanted, seemed like a dream come true. My parents never questioned any of the choices

I made — even when I was reading hot romance at a young age! The important thing for me was that I had hundreds of books that I could choose from in that library, and I don't ever remember the librarian saying no. Now, imagine how much better it would have been to actually have a library and a librarian right in my school!

continued on page 32



Forest of Reading®

by the Ontario Library Association



The 2013 nominees have been announced!

www.accessola.com/forest

...continued from page 31

Learning to make choices at an early age is an integral part of a happy and healthy life. I believe children are more likely to become life-long readers when they are allowed to choose books for themselves. How can children become discerning readers if they are not allowed to choose what they read?

Last winter I was invited to James Bay to provide book talks and a book fair for two schools that were running a “Books in the Home“ program. This is a program sponsored by DeBeers mining company, which give each student from kindergarten to Grade 12 money to purchase a few books to take home. In this small close-knit community there are no libraries or book stores — just very dedicated teachers and staff interested in promoting literacy and reading with their students. In the past, the students had ordered their books through catalogues, but by the time the books arrived, many of the kids had either lost interest, or the books weren’t what they expected them to be. I was told that some of the kids didn’t even bring the books home — they just threw them in the snow!

So this time the organizers decided to try something new. They invited me into the school to do some book talks and actually bring books with me that the students could pick up and look at before making their decisions. The first school I visited was Peetabeck Academy. I brought a wide variety of books for each grade and over the course of a few days each class visited the library for a book talk before making their purchases. The teachers, staff, and

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students were all very excited to see so many tables full of new books to choose from. I noticed that they looked very closely at the books, examined the covers, read the back blurb, flipped through pages, shared books with their friends and teacher, and talked about each book as they made their decisions. The littlest ones couldn’t help squealing and running back and forth to show their teacher their choices. The teens were quieter and moved more slowly along the display, but it was clear that they too were taking their choices seriously.

At the end of the week, I spoke with some of the students and teachers to hear some feedback about the program. Larissa, the kindergarten teacher told me, “I find it really helped students make their book choices when you read to them first. All my students chose the “Elephant and Piggie” books because you read it to them. They’re also really drawn to those covers. I read Eric Carle to them and they remember those books because they are very visual.”

Tanya, a first-year Grade 5 teacher told me, “They are really influenced by their peers and make most of their decisions in consultation with each other.”

Jon, the Grade 8 teacher, said, “Usually in class they just grab a book, read it halfway, stop, and pick up another book. But this time they were choosing books to take home, so they put more thought into their choices. After the book fair, they were talking about their books, reading them and trading them with each other.”

Angela, another teacher, told me “When they got back to the classroom with their books, they were so excited they just wanted to keep reading . So that’s all we did for the rest of the day”.

The second school I brought books to was Attawapiskat. The elementary school still consists of portables and no library, so we held the book fair in the high school gymnasium. Again, each class took turns coming in to make their selections. The teachers seemed as excited as the students to see all the books laid out on tables. I asked the students if they liked choosing books this way. Here are some of their responses:

Grade 6 girl: “My Kokum tells me about good books too. She reads them to me. She read the *Twilight* books to me. It would be good for her to see these books too.”

Grade 7 boy: “I liked seeing the books because sometimes I would choose a book from the catalogue and then when it came, it wasn’t what I thought it would be. This is more fun.”

Grade 7 girl: “I like choosing books myself. I read the cover and the back. My favourite book is *Shannen and her Dream for a School*. She was from here. I also love comics.”

Grade 5 boy: “ I don’t want to own books I won’t read. I like books like Amulet, Twilight and Mortal Combat. I wish I could buy more books.”

The experiences I had in these two



schools in James Bay confirmed for me the belief that students who can see, hear and ask questions when choosing books have a much more rewarding experience with reading. When children select their own books they learn that their opinions are valued. They feel empowered and will read more often. They pay more attention to what they are choosing. They learn about ownership. They may take more risks. They remember and talk more about a book they chose themselves. And so what if they end up hating what they chose? They learn from that experience too. As Sadie, my 5-year-old niece, said when I took her out for breakfast and let her choose what she wanted to eat, “Auntie Maria, next time, I’m going to eat eggs”....that was after she ignored her breakfast and ate mine.

Tips for helping kids learn how to make great reading choices:

- Be enthusiastic about the books you love.
- Allow kids to stop reading a book they don’t like.
- Offer a wide variety of formats.
- Ask them about what they are reading.
- Encourage them to browse in libraries and book stores.
- Let them choose for themselves.
- Say yes as often as you can!

For more information on the Books in the Home program, please visit:

http://www.debeerscanada.com/files_3/weekly-feature-060712.php 

Faculties of Education and School Libraries – Why the Disconnect?



School libraries play a critical role in the culture of a school and in the lives of the many students who use them. Despite their importance, the number of school libraries in Ontario has been on the decline in recent years. Schools with a library that has remained open may have still experienced cuts to staffing and/or funding.

The 2012 Annual Report on Ontario’s Publicly Funded Schools highlights the dramatic decline of school libraries in Ontario. The report notes that while the majority of schools in

Ontario have a library of some kind, only 56% of elementary schools currently have librarians compared to 80% only two decades ago. When we move away from the urban centres, the figures become even bleaker. The report found that only 25% of schools in rural areas of Eastern Ontario have school librarians and that number drops to only 11% for schools in Northern Ontario (People for Education, 2012).

In light of these statistics, what can be done to promote the role of the library and the teacher-librarian in the school

setting? Faculties of Education are uniquely situated to encourage future educators to become teacher-librarians. At the very least, Faculties can demonstrate how teacher candidates might best make use of the library services available in their schools.

To date, much of the research seems to reveal a disconnect in what is taught in Faculties of Education and the reality of the role of the teacher-librarian. In her 2010 study investigating collaboration among classroom teachers, faculty members and school librarians, Patricia Montiel-Overall, Associate Professor, University of Arizona School of Information Resources and Library Science, found that there was a gap in awareness of how one might work with a librarian colleague: “Classroom teachers and university faculty do not yet appear to have an understanding of the new role of librarians as partners in education, and continue to perceive librarians only in traditional roles” (p.32).

What can Faculties of Education do to underscore the importance of school libraries and teacher librarians?

Engage in Action Research

Most Faculties of Education already have a presence in schools as teacher candidates carry out their practicum placements. Why not build on this relationship by encouraging future educators to carry out research projects in their school library? Collaborating with practicing teacher-librarians would strengthen the connection between academic theory and real world applications.

Embed Academic Librarians in Faculty of Education Information Literacy and Research Methods Courses

Academic librarians can help teacher education candidates build their information literacy skills which will serve them both in their course work and their pre-service teaching. The Association of College and Research Libraries’ 2011 document, Information Literacy Standards for Teacher Education, outlines six standards for future educators to strive for, from defining the need for information, to ethical use of knowledge. The document notes that “The Standards also aim

to lead teacher education students to consider how they might integrate information literacy into their future curriculum, instruction, and assessment activities once a member of the teaching profession” (p.1). It is also hoped that once students are practising teachers, they would seek out their school librarian to assist them in their efforts.

Emphasize the Connection Between Subject Areas and Teacher Librarians

Teachers of certain subject areas may struggle to find resources once they arrive in the schools. Math, science, art and music are all important subjects but they are also quite expensive in terms of finding appropriate materials. Faculties of Education should demonstrate the value of partnering with teacher-librarians in order to maximize access to subject specific resources. Teachers who are tasked with teaching an unfamiliar subject should know that they can turn to the school librarian for help. Even educators with a firm grasp on their subject area might discover some wonderful new resources to use in their classroom. Teachers might even collaborate with their school librarian in order to create exciting cross-curricular information literacy projects.

Although there is currently a wide gap between Faculties of Education and school libraries, many possibilities exist for both parties to highlight their roles and to collaborate with each other.

It is only by working together that we can provide improved access and better services to teachers and students alike.

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To Be Free or Not to Be: Choice in Your K-8 School Library

“Choice” in the age of information

Children growing up in the Age of Information have access to limitless material with the simple click of a mouse. With this loss of control over information, gone are the days where we can tell students what to read. Should the same then, hold true for School Libraries? Should students be free to choose any reading material they find there? There are several barriers teacher-librarians face when pondering the issue of “free choice”. Often, it has less to do with what the students choose and more to do with how students choose books. Let’s think about how we enable our students to make informed decisions in a world where there is so much “free choice.”

Guidelines from school boards

Guidelines from school boards can sometimes be vague and unclear about how to proceed with student “book choice.” The York Region District School Board’s, *Selection Procedures for Learning Resources: A Guide to Equity* 2003, states that there should be a wide variety of books available to students, yet it does not suggest age restrictions or which books students should read. Rather, the document suggests that teachers should discuss the books with students and identify bias and multiple points of view in order to support the development of critical thinking skills. We can infer then that it is our responsibility as educators to provide students with the appropriate tools to help make wise choices independently.

This does not, however, come without challenges.

Challenges facing teacher-librarians

I spoke with teacher-librarians from the York Region District School Board and they shared a few of their challenges with me. Some feel pressured by teachers and parents to only allow students to choose books that fit their reading level from “levelled book bins.” The teacher-librarians note that this causes some students to dislike reading, because they are “forced” to read from limited books and topics. Yet, they also note that sometimes when students are given “free choice” they choose books that are far too difficult or easy for them.

The case is similar with regard to genre. Teachers and parents request that their students choose a specific genre to fit with their classroom “genre of the month.” They also ask teacher-librarians to make sure the student picks a different genre if the student has been choosing the same, such as “Graphic Novels”, over and over again. In speaking with the students, however, the teacher-librarian might recognize that students are comfortable with a specific genre and they look forward to reading similar books. Those who are required to read “non-fiction” books to fit with the class theme often end up to disliking reading. The teacher-librarian again, however, recognizes the importance of exposing children to a wide variety of genres.

Among the greatest challenge facing teacher-librarians is setting limits with regard to content that young students may not be ready for emotionally. *The Hunger Games* series caused a stir in many classroom libraries, especially when the movie became such a hit. Students, as young as 7, saw it with older siblings and families and then clamoured to get a copy of the book in their school libraries. There is little consensus amongst teachers, parents and teacher-librarians about how much, if any, censorship is necessary.

Supporting students in making informed book choices

Researchers have found that when students choose their own books, they become better readers. Knowing that “free choice” helps students improve their reading and recognize the challenges facing teacher-librarians, we must find ways to help students make informed decisions. Below are some ideas to support teacher-librarians in this endeavour.

Just right books

It’s not uncommon for classroom teachers to teach their students how to select a “Just Right Book” during the first weeks of school. Some teacher-librarians reinforce this skill in their libraries by developing the criteria, such as “the Five Finger Rule”, with their student patrons. Having an anchor chart in the library that shows how students can select a book that is appropriate for them would support students in making fitting choices for themselves and then becomes a tool for book choice discussions. It can be empowering to say, “Have you used our criteria on the chart to see if that book is appropriate for you?” instead of “I think that book is too difficult for you.”

Exploring new genres

Most teacher-librarians I spoke to feel that having a “genre of the month” greatly limits the students’ choices. Instead, they have set up displays linking various genres by theme. For example, some students love reading the *Magic Tree House* series. The series offers a non-fiction companion book that expands on the facts presented in the fiction book. This is a great opportunity for teacher-librarians to offer a different genre of book to a student who has shown interest

in the theme. Groups of students might also be involved in working with the teacher-librarian to discuss and select a variety of books to include in a display complimenting the theme.

Quiet censorship

Parents and teacher-librarians are often divided on the topic of censorship, making it challenging to come up with a blanket decision. Many teacher-librarians have a section in the library dedicated solely to intermediate students. The books in this section are labelled “YA” (young adult). Some teacher-librarians present this section to younger students as something to look forward to when they get older. For parents who insist on free choice, some teacher-librarians ask for written permission from parents and then allow younger students to choose books from this section. Others prefer that parents obtain the book from their public library or local bookstore.

Alternatives to support quiet censorship

Sometimes, teacher-librarians find that students may ask for a certain book, like *The Hunger Games*, but when probed further, the only reason the student wants it is because it’s “the book to ask for”. This is a good time to offer a comparable alternative. Having a display comparing “Hot Books” may help. For example, the display might say “If you’re 8 and you’d like to read *The Hunger Games*, try *City of Embers* instead”. Or “If you’re 9 and you’d like to read *Twilight* try *Vampire Island* instead”. Websites like <http://www.commonssensemedia.org/> can help you find age-appropriate comparable books.

Final thoughts

In an age where choice is everywhere, it seems the answer is clear: As educators we need to work with teachers, students and their families to find ways to show students how to make appropriate choices for themselves. We need to know our library collections and our readers, offer a wide variety of choice, and be prepared to offer other options. We need to be there every step of the way, providing opportunities for discussion to help them make sense of their ever-changing world. This skill will take them far beyond the material they choose to read. ■

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