

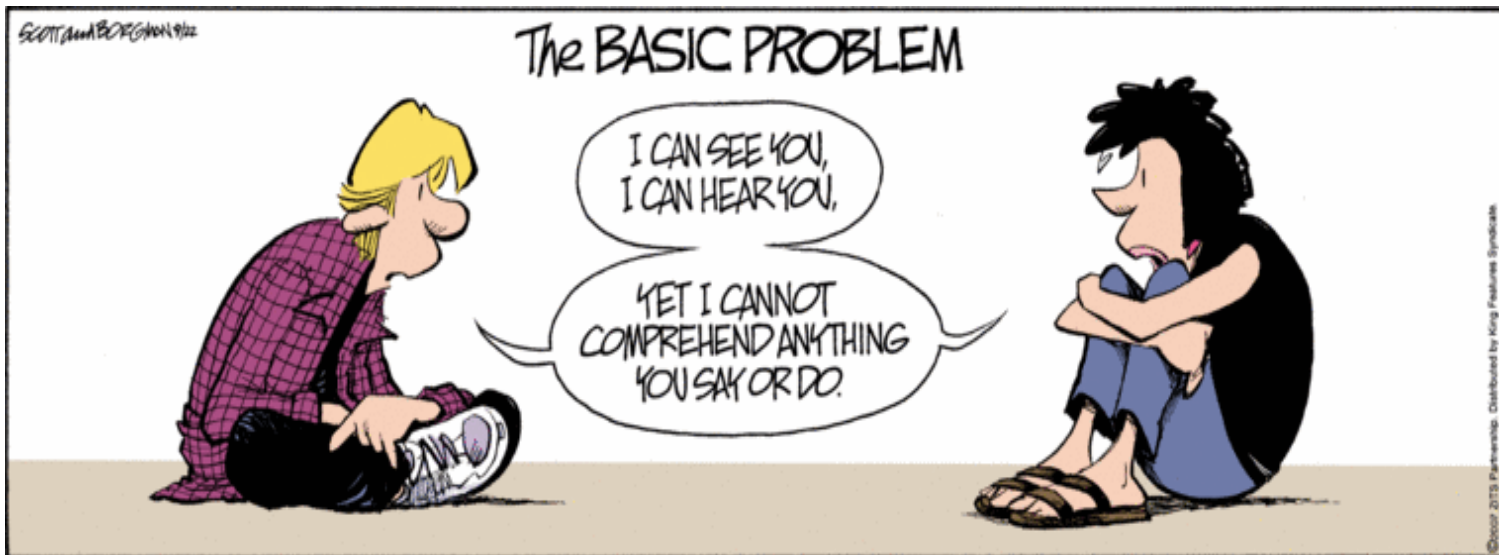
The Nuts & Bolts of Serving Teens



Rheal Doucette, Ottawa Public Library 2011

OLA Super Conference 2013
Ottawa Public Library

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Agenda

- Teen Services at Ottawa Public Library
- The Teenage Brain and Stages of Development
- Teens in the Library
- Creating a Welcoming Environment
- Reference and Reader's Advisory
- Programming



Ottawa Public Library Teen Services Strategy

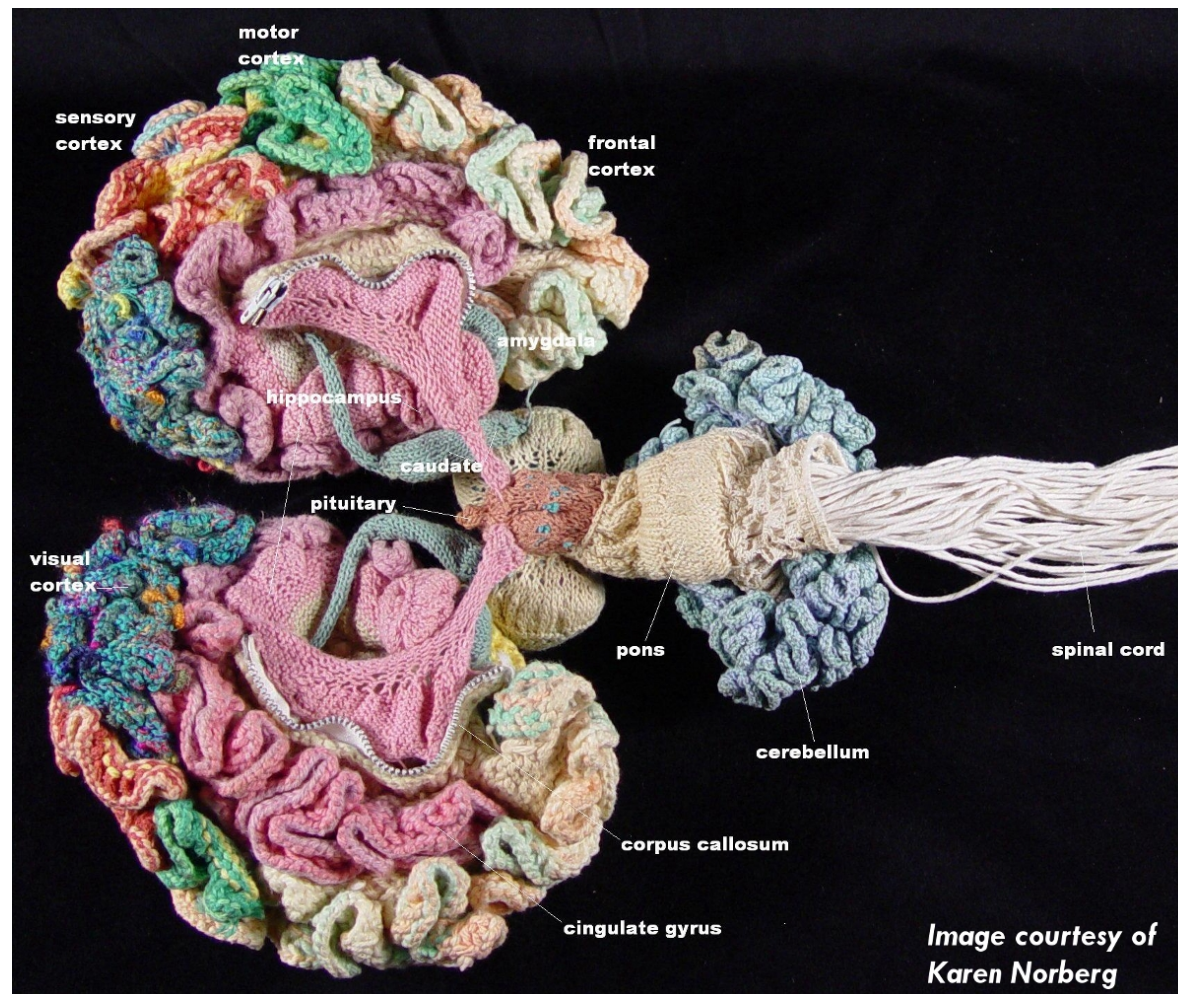
Principles of Teen Services

- Teen engagement
- Service excellence
- Respectful service
- Developmentally appropriate service



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The Teenage Brain





Early Adolescence 11-13

- Seeks independence from family
- Displays defiant behaviours
- Peer group dominates
- Increased concern about appearance
- Ego dominates viewing of all issues



Middle Adolescence 14 – 16

- Makes decisions on own
- Takes risks/seeks new experiences
- Begins to make lasting relationships
- Experiments with self-image
- Develops sense of values/morality and intellectual awareness



Late Adolescence 17 – 18

- Seeks to firmly establish independence
- Views world idealistically
- Relationships stabilize
- Sets goals for their future
- Awareness of the world beyond school and home

Characteristics of Millennials



Teens in the library often...

- Socialize in groups
- Have little sense of volume control
- Run, dance, skip, sit on tables
- Act roughly with one another
- React dramatically to everything!
- Are unaware that their behaviour affects others



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Create a welcoming environment



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- Make space(s) for teens
- Involve teen volunteers in planning
- Consider changing rules
- Greet teens with a smile
- Get to know their names
- Include all staff!



What to Do When Teens are Being Teens at the Library...

- Don't react immediately
- Approach them respectfully
- Be informal, but take care when joking
- Give them lots of chances to improve!
- Be clear about expectations and consequences—and follow through
- React to the behaviour not the person
- Welcome them back, and mean it!



Remember

Stay calm and don't take it personally!



OMG! No Place to Hide!

Serving Teens at your Info Desk



Reference Scenario

A parent comes to the reference desk with her teen daughter. The girl is texting on her phone while the mother says she needs books on, “Biography”.



Reference Questions

- Talk to the teen, not to the parent, and take a team approach
- Remind them when media multitasking is inappropriate
- Help define info needs, types of sources needed
- Use clear and concise language
- Show how to use a reference book
- They procrastinate
- For teens, Reference desk = authority
- Treat all questions equally
- Remember confidentiality and privacy
- Less is more!



Reader's Advisory Scenario

A teenage boy comes to the information desk and reluctantly asks for “a book over 200 pages.”



Teens as Readers

Many reasons for reading:

School assignment

Entertainment

Escape from the everyday

Windows/mirrors

Safe experimentation



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They are inexperienced readers

Haven't read widely

May not know or be able to articulate what they like



Readers' Advisory Tips

- Get up from behind the desk
- Engage them in conversation
- Aim high
- Give them options
- Put the books down not into their hands
- Don't gush
- Be informal, but not cool
- Ask for their recommendations!



Ask and Listen

Is it just for fun, or do you have an assignment?

Are you into reading? What else do you like to do?

What books have you enjoyed in the past?

What DON'T you like in a book?

Do you like your books to have some romance in them?

Do you prefer something set in the present day? The past? The future?

Do you like books with supernatural creatures or do you prefer books that are more like real life?

What other stuff are you into? (TV, movies, games, sports, etc)



What if They Don't Ask?

Create displays on simple, popular themes

- Romance (supernatural romance, summer romance)
- Action (spies, zombie-killers, bounty hunters)
- Intense Reads (real life problems, anorexia, drug use, etc)
- Fast reads

Create bookmarks

- Readalikes for requested authors
- Shorter is better, don't try to be comprehensive
- Should include recent titles



Programming Scenario

You're asked to run a program for teens during March Break with a very small budget. Where do you start?



Programming Planning

- “What’s in it for me?”
- Need not focus on books and reading
- Teen patrons are as diverse as adults
- Be aware of teen trends and pop culture
- Program success may change rapidly
- Get your teen volunteers involved in planning and helping at event, even if they don’t attend
- Timing is important!



The Program is Planned, now What?

- Promote one-on-one
- Make sure all staff know about and can answer questions about the event
- Serve refreshments
- Make it drop-in, fluid and flexible
- Keep it a teen-only event
- Focus on outcomes and don't be afraid to fail!



**The Public
Library is a
unique place
for teens.**



Smart Chicks Kick It Tour, OPL Teen Author Fest 2011

Rheal Doucette, Ottawa Public Library 2011





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Thank You!

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Questions?

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