Reaching & Teaching ALL Students:
Supporting Teen Developing Readers in your Library

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MSLA 2019
About Me
About Me

- Simmons SLIS, 2015
- **Before libraries:** Pre-k & kindergarten early literacy programs
- **After SLIS:** Public Youth Services Librarian in Worcester Public Library/Worcester Public Schools’ One City, One Library program
- **Now:** School Librarian at New Bedford High School
- **Interests:** Early Literacy/Literacy, Library Anxiety, Access/Equity, Power dynamics in libraries/information
Beliefs about Teaching, Learning, & School Libraries

- Meet people where they’re at!
- Reluctant readers
- School Library → Public Library & Lifelong Information Access
- Reading & Research → Empathy & Critical Thinking
About NBHS
About NBHS

- **Enrollment:** 2,300 students, grades 9-12
- Level 4 school since 2013
- Library closed (on & off), 2013-2016
- Only professionally staffed library in district
- Most students have little or no experience with school or public libraries
About NBHS: Demographics (DESE)
About NBHS: Programs

- ESL
  - Newcomers
- SLIFE (Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education)
- SpEd
  - TR5 program
  - ASD program
  - Sub separate & Inclusion classes
- Phonics-based Reading class
- 20 AP courses, including AP Capstone
- Academy of Honors
- 8th & 12th Grade Dual enrollment
- Pre-k program
- NAF (career) Academies
Collection
Reading is “a practice that is socially, culturally, institutionally situated— one that is rarely about just written language.”

-Donna E. Alvermann, Reading adolescents’ reading identities: Looking back to see ahead
Collection Considerations

- WHITE SPACE
- Covers Matter!
- Fonts & Font size
- Photos & Illustrations
- Text block size & Line spacing
- Reading level (adapted, Hi/Lo, Elementary level)
Jason Reynolds

How poetry can help kids turn a fear of literature into love
Hi/Lo

- Most around 4th/5th grade level
- Appeal to students at all levels
- Saddleback- several collections:
  - Verse
  - Genre (Adventure, Mystery, Spy, Sci-Fi)
- Great start but still needed something lower

*All images from Amazon.com*
Teen Emergent Reader Library

“I want my students to see that books aren’t scary.” - NBHS ESL Teacher
TERL

- Saddleback Educational Publishing
- Start at Beginning Reader - Grade 1/2 Level
- Full color visual supports throughout
- Wide range of topics- History, Verse, STEM, Real Life, Life Skills, Biography

*All images from Amazon.com*
Picture Books

“I like reading when there’s pictures in it. It’s easier to understand.”

- NBHS Student
Picture Books

- ELLs, SpEd, Gen Ed, SLP
- High Lexile with visual supports
- Wide range of topics
  - History, Science, Literature, Biographies, & more
- Makes complex topics/concepts accessible

*All images from Amazon.com
Comics & Manga

“My teacher showed me here and then I got addicted.” - Valdir
Comics & Manga

- Visuals/limited text make them more accessible = less intimidating
- Wide range of topics & content area connections
- Manga series keep students reading
- Students discuss them!
Nonfiction

“Miss, I don’t know what book to pick- I mean I know HOW to read but I’ve never read a book before.” - NBHS Student
Nonfiction

- Look beyond YA
- Great way to tie in non-academic interests
- Let students SEE themselves

*All images from Amazon.com
What My Students Love

- Sports (Soccer, Football, Basketball)
- Manga (Naruto, Dragon Ball Z)
- Comics (Superheroes)
- Poetry
- Mythology
- Animals
- Hip Hop & Rap
- Horror & Romance Fiction
- Civil Rights & BLM
Collection Tips

- Buy what they want
- Use Titlewave Tags & Tag Explorer
- Look beyond traditional book review sources
- Think visually
- Focus on making students feel *comfortable* with books first
- Defend your developing readers from “shoulds”
Space
Space Considerations

- Display & faceouts
- Signage & Word Choice
- Colors & Color-coding
- You’re not your user
- Anticipate their needs- don’t make them ask questions
Displays

“Wait- Miss, can I get books in here?” -NBHS Student body
Before

After
What would you rather browse?
Done with Dewey

Student: “What do the numbers on the side of the book mean?”

Me: “…”

Student: “Oh, I don’t like that.”
Genrefication: Fiction (General & Hi/Lo)

- Horror
- Fantasy
- Science Fiction
- Historical
- Mystery
- Sports
- Romance
- Real Life
- Classics
Genrefication: Biography

- Writers
- Art & Culture
- Musicians
- Sports
- U.S. History (by era)
- World History (by era)
- STEM (by field)
- Memoirs
Genrefication: Comics

- Manga
- Horror
- Real Life
- Historical
- Science Fiction & Fantasy
- Classics, Mythology, & Folktales
- Superheroes
- Biographies & Nonfiction
Genrefication: Nonfiction

So far:

- Poetry
- Mythology
- Sports
  - Baseball
  - Basketball
  - Football
  - Soccer
Services
Service Considerations

● Potential access barriers (emotional, mental, physical, developmental, linguistic, financial, etc.)

● Opportunities for differentiation

● Universal Design for Learning Principles:
  ○ Multiple Means of Representation
  ○ Multiple Means of Engagement
  ○ Multiple Means of Action & Expression
Book Checkout & Research

Differentiated texts

Looking in the shelves can be intimidating—bring the books to them!

Organized by interest
Summer Reading

Picking a book can be intimidating—provide tools to aid in the process.
Many students may not be familiar with genres—highlight how the books tie into their existing interests.

Use their language—“Drama” = Romance

Acknowledge that not every student loves reading—include options for them too! (comic books, short novels, novels in verse, novels with short chapters, & high interest nonfiction)

If you like sports
Bradbury, Ray
Fahrenheit 451
Dawson, J.K.
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire
Elmore Leonard
Great Books: Crime and Punishment
Hemingway, Ernest
The Sun Also Rises
Zapata, Eleonora
What the Cat Dragged In
Dumas, Alexandre
The Three Musketeers

If you like poetry
Auden, W.H.
September 1, 1939
 requisition
Alice Walker
The Color Purple
Dylan Thomas
Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night

If you like real people and stories
Bronte, Charlotte
Jane Eyre
Copp, Colin
Unsung: The Story of Negro League Legend

If you want to know more about LGBTQA lives and stories
Collins, K.L.
The Hunger Games
Fields, D.J.
Rainbow on the Sky
Gay, Carrie
The Boy Who Lived

If you want to know more about Black Lives Matter
Amin, Teju
Between the World and Me
Brooks,ude
The Light We Lost

If you hate reading
Anderson, Jamie
The Letter Knew
Arnold, Grace
Bookish versus Bookies

If you like drama
Ackerman, Ann
He Said, She Said
Coben, Harlan
The Stranger

If you like comics
Dumas, Alexandre
Tintin
Kosinski, Art
Finding Jack

Summer Reading: Book List

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Service & Instruction Tips

● Notice how your SpEd teachers give instructions
  ○ Be clear and descriptive
● Don’t assume any prior knowledge
● Avoid jargon
Adapt & Unlearn
"[...] culture constructs not only what counts as reading when reading really counts, but also who counts as a reader."

-Donna E. Alvermann, Reading adolescents’ reading identities: Looking back to see ahead
Take a Beginner’s Mindset

- Don’t Judge
- Be Curious
- Question Everything
- Listen
- Find Patterns
Ask: As the Librarian

- What am I seeing?
- What am I seeing that makes me say that?
- What are the realistic (lived) steps that are necessary to make this happen? (BREAK IT DOWN)
- What steps may be difficult (emotionally, mentally, physically, financially, linguistically, etc.) for my community?
- How can I anticipate & address these barriers?
Ask: As the Student

● What do I need to know in order to understand this?

● If I don’t know something, what would I need to feel comfortable with not knowing this?
Takeaways

- Look everywhere for ideas (beyond education, LIS)
- Look at who’s in front of you, not who “should” be in front of you
- Meet people where they’re at
- Center the needs of your underserved student populations/departments to support everyone
- Unlearn a lot, adapt the rest
- Ask questions, be humble
Be intentional:
Avoid deficit language
"We can talk about differences without resorting to deficit language by being mindful and respectful of those we are speaking or researching about. We can shift the question from 'how can we fix these students?' to *how can we best serve them?* It doesn't mean we don't speak hard truths. But it does mean we **try to ask more critical questions** to have a deeper understanding of the issues."

-Sofia Bahena (quoted in Kamenetz, 2018)

Let's Stop Talking about the 30 Million Word Gap
Questions?

Have questions? Need someone to share ideas with?

Email me:

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References


