

Resources for the Teacher Librarian

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Krashen, Stephen D., Sy-Ying Lee, and Christy Lao. **Comprehensible and Compelling: The Causes and Effects of Free Voluntary Reading.** Libraries Unlimited, 2018. 195p. \$35. ISBN: 9781440857980.

When I first met Dr. Krashen in the Washington D.C. railroad station, we hatched out the idea for his first book: *The Power of Reading*. That book was a huge boost for teacher librarians who sought evidence that large amounts of reading, free voluntary reading, and the reader's choice of that reading was extremely powerful in helping young readers succeed in the quest for literacy. In this, his third book on the topic, he adds more and convincing research about supplying young readers with choice and giving them time to read what they find compelling. It still makes sense. The research reported here includes new studies, and several have been conducted with his co-authors in China. The argument for large collections of books children and teens want to read, the power of storytelling, the power of choice and other important factors boost literacy even in the face of the powerful downward push of poverty. Employing the marginal notes idea that we used in his first book, you can give this book to administrators, reading teachers, and parents who can quickly scan for interesting ideas and then dip into the main text of the book beside the notes for more information. It is extremely important to read this book and merge it into the ideas of the new AASL Standards to make your case for keeping reading a powerful program element alongside inquiry. An essential read!

Rendina, Diana. **Reimagining Library Spaces: Transform Your Space on Any Budget.** ISTE, 2017. 150p. \$24.95. ISBN: 1564843912

This is the first in a three-part series about school libraries (watch out, AASL). Rendina writes an easy narrative about how to start from a very traditional library and transform the space step by step in a visionary way to meet the needs of today's learners. Starting from a space almost filled

with immovable book shelves, she moves to weeding, weeding, weeding, and then to opening up six different learning spaces from large to smaller, including a fully functioning makerspace. If you are even contemplating a shift, this is a book with lots of ideas that will get you started. As I have noted in a number of writings and articles, the result of a friendly, flexible space full of things to do and use makes a dramatic difference in who comes there and what they use it for. She is correct in that change in the physical space never ends since it adapts to the learners rather than them having to adapt to whatever space you currently have. She knows what she is talking about! Highly recommended.

Murawski, Wendy W. and Wendy Lochner. **Beyond Co-teaching Basics: A Data-Driven, No-Fail Model for Continuous Improvement.** ASWCD, 2017. 227p. \$34.95. ISBN: 9781416624240.

I had high hopes for this book! Imagine my favorite topic and even though it concentrates on co-teaching in special ed, it just might have some great advice for teacher librarians. Wrong. The role of the partners in this book are unequal. They are not peers. One is the classroom teacher and the co-teacher, while participating in the learning activities is actually part of the team where supervision is taking place. If you as a teacher are going to teach alongside a person who is evaluating your performance, I think the partnership has a major reason to fail. It is one thing to mentor and dig in to the learning experience with equal fervor, but quite another to have a wall of reluctance and perhaps even fear before you even set out. Instructional coaches and principals often come into classrooms to observe and I suppose, after a while, the classroom teacher gets used to such observations; or, there might be a video of the lesson being recorded for later analysis. Not my cup of tea. So, reluctantly, don't bother with this one. No good advice here.

Libresco, Andrea S., Jeannette J. Balantic and Mary Battenfeld. **Notable Books, Notable Lessons: Putting Social Studies Back in the K-8 Curriculum.** Libraries Unlimited, 2017. 231p. \$40. ISBN: 9781440840791

There are hundreds of these kinds of books that have been published over the last several decades. Take a book, create a lesson around it, provide the lesson plan and the handouts—everything the teacher will need—and publish it. This one concentrates on social studies and often reprints original sources as a part of the lesson worksheets. Personally,



I prefer that children be introduced to inquiry where they search and find materials relevant to a major question they or the teacher and the teacher librarian have developed together. No coteaching needed in this collection. But if instant lessons to be conducted by a single person is your cup of tea, then the books presented in this collection are worth acquiring. Not recommended as part of the concept of the learning commons as a place to find, create, think and deeply understand. Not recommended.

Crockett, Lee Watanabe and Andrew Churches. **Mindful Assessment: The 6 Essential Fluencies of Innovative Learning** (Teaching 21st Century Skills to Modern Learners) Solution Tree Press, 2017. 128p. \$29.95. ISBN: 9781942496885.

This credible team of authors who have excellent connections to school libraries have teamed to construct rubrics that might be used to assess what students have learned when the teacher librarian embeds a particular skill into a cotaught learning experience with a classroom teacher. Considering what content knowledge the teacher wants the learners to know and be able to do, first decide what skill in your quiver will boost that content knowledge just in time to make a powerful difference. Then during the assessment period of your two mentors, both of you will look for both the content knowledge mastery and the process skills exhibited to determine how many of the learners met or exceeded both your objectives. Here is the list of process skills covered in this book: Solution fluency, information fluency, creativity fluency, media fluency, collaboration fluency latency, global digital citizenship. One can

YA FICTION

EXPRESSING THEMSELVES

Yee, F. C. **The Epic Crush of Genie Lo**. Amulet, 2017. 320p. \$18.99 ISBN: 9781419725487. Grades 7 up. Genie Lo has one focus, like many Chinese-American students at her school: getting into a great college and leaving her poor Bay Area neighborhood behind. She has no time for distraction but what can she do when a new student named Quentin convinces her that, like him, she has superpowers—and that she must join in his fight against Chinese demons out to kill humans. Genie's tendency towards anger fuels her newly discovered kickass fighting powers in a series of battles against wily demons. She's an entertaining, larger-than-life character grappling with a crazy new reality, uncertainty about her future, and a growing crush on Quentin. This smart urban fantasy's a wild and wonderful ride.

Thomas, Angie. **The Hate U Give**. Balzer + Bray, 2017. 464p. \$17.99. ISBN: 9780062498533. Grades 8 up. In this tour de force, sixteen-year-old Starr finds the courage to speak out despite real danger. Starr's no stranger to violence, growing up and working at her father's store in a tough neighborhood. She and her brothers split their time between their largely African-American community and a mostly white prep school in the suburbs. She's learned to speak in two voices, to act like two different people. But when Starr and her childhood friend, Khalil, are on their way home from a party one night, a police officer pulls them over and shoots unarmed Khalil to death. What will happen to Starr as the only witness? Should she speak to the grand jury and to the press? What's her place in the neighborhood protests? In an extraordinary multifaceted narrative, Starr draws readers into her life to share her pain and anger, her hard decisions, and the host of friends and family who help her through.

Reed, Amy Lynn. **The Nowhere Girls**. Simon, 2017. 416p. \$17.99. ISBN: 9781481481731. Grades 9 up. Grace, whose mother is a liberal minister, doesn't know what to make of her conservative new town, just 20 miles from the University of Oregon and half a country away from her childhood home in Kentucky. But when she reads the agonizing messages carved into her bedroom walls by Lucy, the last girl who lived there, and then learns the story of how Lucy was gang raped, Grace needs to do something. She bands together with her new friends: angry Rosina, who has to hide her attraction to girls from her mother, and Erin, a top student who handles her autism better than her intense mother does. The three initiate secret girls-only meetings that bring together fellow students angry about what happened to Lucy and other reports of sexual assault downplayed by the school authorities. And they do make a difference. With outstanding characterizations of the girls and their mothers, a gripping plot, and serious social issues, this is not to be missed.

Alexander, Kwame, with Mary Rand Hess. **Solo**. Blink, 2017. 464p. \$17.99. ISBN: 9780310761839. Grades 8 up. Blade, 17, has grown up in the shadow of his father, Rutherford Morrison, a fading rock star with addiction problems. With his mother long since dead, Blade relies on his own music and his girlfriend for his emotional needs. When the romance falls apart and Blade learns a distressing fact about his own history, he sets off on an impulsive trip to Ghana to seek a figure from his past. He connects with a young woman and a child in a small village but suffers a setback when his father shows up with a camera crew. Blade tells his own story in verses that echo the music in his head and heart, creating a powerful coming of age tale that spans two continents.

quickly see the overlap of these areas of process skills with the new AASL standards and the treatment here is a bit less jargonistic and straight forward, making it easier to get your head around and use with other members of the teaching staff. Publishing with a popular press in education is also a great advantage for these authors in getting their ideas accepted in the larger educational community. A must purchase and excellent source if you like the idea of rubrics as a means of assessment.

Pandora, Cherie P. and Kathy Frederick. **Full STEAM Ahead: Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics in Library Programs and Collections.** (Libraries Unlimited Professional Guides for Young Adult Librarians Series) Libraries Unlimited, 2017. 240p. \$45. ISBN: 97814408353401.

I like this book and I don't like this book. First the good news: The authors envision the library learning commons as a performance space and an event space of student creativity in science, technology, engineering, the arts, and math. Hooray! Instead of one science fair sponsored by the science department each year, here is an opportunity to have regular events that cross disciplines, involve the community, and provide students with opportunities to compete or just showcase what they as individuals or groups have invented or created, or problems they have solved. The authors do make the case that this can be in collaboration with teachers and departments of the school, or, and this is why I don't like the book, they also see these events may be just a product of the library learning commons year of programmed events. Independent events, in my view, give one more

piece of evidence that the library is an isolated program in a school. If I were the content editor of this book, I would have had the authors demonstrate much more clearly that the events envisioned in the book are THE culminating outgrowth of cotaught learning experiences of classrooms and departments of the school and its curriculum. These events can be the spectacular showcase events that all the teachers in the school and the administrators are coordinating. These might be monthly showcases or several a year connected with parent nights and school board meetings. They become evidence that the library learning commons is a powerful extension of the classroom—events that are the win-win for every teacher, administrators, and the teacher librarian—and positive proof that we boost achievement and know how to celebrate it! Isolated events, even though well intentioned, just can't have the same positive benefits. So, for the ideas with a focus that will pay incredible dividends, buy this book; get a vision; talk it up with the administration and faculty; do one or two connected events; and, you are off and running. These are the kinds of things that can put the library learning commons in the headlines of the education section of the local news.

Williams, Connie Hamner. **Understanding Government Information: A Teaching Strategy Toolkit for Grades 7–12.** Libraries Unlimited, 2017. 266p. \$50. ISBN: 9781440843495.

If you are in the market to open your collection to a connection resource of open educational resources (OER), this is a book that you can use to connect into the vast resources available from the government for free for middle and high school students. It will teach you

how to dig beyond just a Google search and perhaps get on the mailing list of a number of entities that are a part of the curriculum of your school. For each cotaught learning experience, I would recommend that you add to the OPAC either a LibGuide or a free Google site where you can curate many OER resources and even allow both teacher and students a chance to help you find, locate, and annotate resources that the community of learners could share during information exploration during the inquiry process. Recommended.

Horan, Timothy. **Create Your School Library Writing Center: Grades K–6.** Libraries Unlimited, 2017. 165p. \$45. ISBN: 9781440835254.

Imagine children who have come into the library for their weekly visit. Instead of just sitting down for a library lesson and picking out a book, these children consider the library learning commons as making time. They have choices. They could read a book or write a book, watch a video or create a video, use a computer software program or code—one among many choices. And, our author envisions that one of the “centers” in the LLC could be a writing center. But instead of opening up opportunities for kids to dream and do all kinds of writing and publishing, our author envisions a curriculum. Boring. Won't work. No match for the creativity going on in the rest of the LLC projects of interest. This book passes up the great disruptive vision of the LLC to allow kids to be themselves as thinkers, creators, explorer. There are plenty of computer programs and Google docs that they could create and share, and find their work ending up in the ebook collection of the LLC. Pass this one up.